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A KNIGHT OF THE HIGHWAY

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I.

THE NE'ER-DO-WELL.

THE powerful locomotive which drew the long freight-train came to a sudden stop. Something in the nature of a spasm, so human was it, communicated itself from car to car, and each in turn ceased to move. The jar wakened Rossiter, outstretched upon the top of some boxes and bales, from a heavy sleep, and on opening his eyes and finding himself encompassed by a breathless tropical blackness he did not for an instant realize where he was. He put out his hand and encountered the boards of the car-roof just above his head. Then he recalled his whereabouts. He was reeking with sweat, for the atmosphere of the confined space was stifling.

All day the pitiless September sun had blazed in a coppery heaven; all day the parched earth had given back to the sky the fumes of heat; and yet Rossiter had clung to his oven-like retreat, in the first place because with every revolution of the wheels he was carried nearer to his destination, and in the second place because he could not easily descend from the train while it was in motion. Half a loaf of bread and a few dry cookies had served to quiet the gnawings of hunger, while two wizened lemons had in a measure allayed the pangs of thirst. But now he sought in vain for the last precious bit of fruit which he had intended to keep against this time of need. The jolting of the car had evidently caused his treasure to roll from the spot where he had placed it with such care. Uttering an exclamation of disappointment, he dragged himself a few feet and placed his lips to a crack in the side of the car, through which he drank eagerly great draughts of the

partially cooled night air. As he was about to resume his former position he inhaled a heavy waft of engine smoke.

"The devil!" he ejaculated. "This is more than I can stand!"

He seized his little bundle of clothes and worked his way over the bales and boxes to the door. For a time he feared that he was hopelessly a prisoner, as the obstinate barrier to his escape would not budge. The perspiration streamed from his forehead into his eyes, and his hair was as wet as though he had soused his head in water. He had taken stock of the fastenings when he had stowed himself away at Clevalo, but he was discovering that an easy entrance into a freight-car packed with merchandise that has space enough to shift slightly does not necessarily mean an easy exit.

At length, after several sharp creaks of remonstrance, the door gaped sufficiently to allow him to squeeze his body through. He cast a glance up and down the adjoining track and then leaped. As his feet crunched upon the cinders someone sprang from the next car to the top of the one he had just quitted. It was a brakeman.

"You damn tramp!" he shouted, and raised his hand as though about to hurl a missile.

Rossiter ran, dodging as he went, but nothing save a harsh guffaw followed from the car-top.

"Sold, Johnny!" bellowed the brakeman; "but I can tell ye if I'd had a hunk of coal, ye'd have got it blim in the back!"

Just then, with a long series of jerks, the train started. An electric light beyond the tracks threw the gesticulating figure on the car-top into strong outline for a moment and his pose held Rossiter's attention, but the effect was quickly spoiled by the onward movement of the train. Rossiter now turned to survey his surroundings. The sputtering electrics told him that he was in a town of considerable size. Above the rumbling cars several large buildings loomed blackly. Behind him the ground sloped sharply to a stream, which he could not see on account of a white vapor which hung over it. At his left was a bridge, and as he examined this, and the ugly frame structures which lined the street towards which it led, a sense of familiarity gave him a swift thrill of surprise.

"The deuce!" he exclaimed. "I wonder if it is?"

He wheeled to the right and regarded a long freight-house and a tall pile capped by a huge sign, the letters upon which he vainly strove to distinguish. A puzzled expression crossed his face, and he waited impatiently for the caboose of the freight-train to pass. At length the tracks were clear. A few rods away, on one side of a small square, the lights of a hotel twinkled through the branches of a row of elm-trees. Directly opposite was a railway station, a short distance from which a freight and accommodation train was about pulling out.

"Illica, by Jove!" cried Rossiter. "Well, if this isn't curious!" and his mind went back a dozen years to the June day when he had last set foot in the quiet city on the banks of the Mohondaga. Then he was a thoughtless youth fresh from college, full of a youth's dreams, not without ambition,—and now—well, his present status was not one to be contemplated with pride, nor did the vista down which he looked in retrospect afford him many gleams of satisfaction. He was wont to tell himself at times that he had had hard luck, but when he faced the cold truth he knew in his innermost soul that luck had played no part whatever in his descent of the ladder of respectability. Never more clearly than at this moment, amid surroundings long ago familiar, did he realize what an utter wreck he had made of his life. But he put on the devil-may-care air he was at intervals accustomed to assume and slouched across the tracks in the direction of the station.

"What hour can it be?" he muttered. "Rather late, I judge, by the fact that there are so few people about."

There was a man standing in the open station door-way whom Rossiter took, from his dress, to be either a ticket agent or conductor. He had his watch in his hand.

"Will you be kind enough to tell me the time?" Rossiter asked.

The railroad man opened his lips as though he were about to answer, but as he glanced at his questioner astonishment seemed to choke his utterance. He looked Rossiter up and down, and finally let his eyes rest upon the vagrant's countenance, covered with a ten days' growth of beard, the forehead grimy and streaked with perspiration, the hair hanging in greasy elf-locks from beneath a torn cap.

"Well, if you ain't a beauty!" he exclaimed, with an amused chuckle.

Rossiter's hand went up to his face as he moved on. He searched his pockets for what served him as a handkerchief, pulled it out, and mopped his forehead, cheeks, and neck. Then he paused an instant and endeavored to smooth his hair a trifle, but without much success. The man's words had affected him more than such a speech would usually have done. He had received too many kicks and cuffs and oaths to heed them much, as a rule, but somehow the rebuff with which he had just met stung like a sharp blow upon an open wound. Heretofore he had associated with Illica nothing but pleasant things. Whenever he had visited it formerly from the small town less than a dozen miles distant where he had passed his college days, he had always been treated with very marked favor. To Illica the students frequently sojourned for their half holidays. It was where they attended the theatre, had their dinners, and sometimes joined in social functions. Among the young men of his time at Monroe College, as the adjoining institution was called, no one visited Illica more frequently than

Rossiter. With plenty of money at his command, possessed of a bright manner and a ready wit, and being withal quite prominent as an athlete, he had once had a number of friends and many acquaintances in the staid but pleasant inland city.

He supposed that he had buried shame; he had told himself that he had worn out regret; but both now rose to torment him. As he moved in the direction of the square, he passed one of the station windows and glanced in. A clock high upon the wall informed him that it was quarter past eleven.

"I must have a beer, if it takes my last nickel," he said, moistening his parched lips with his tongue.

Presently he rounded the corner of the station and stood in the full glare of the electric lights. There were a few men seated upon the hotel steps, and at the upper end of the open space a trolley-car was putting down a passenger, otherwise there was no indication of life. Rossiter plunged a hand into one of his trousers pockets and drew forth four coins, a five-cent piece and three pennies. He knew that it would be folly to attempt to enter the hotel, so he started along the north side of the square in search of a saloon. He did not have to go far. A gayly illumined place, which went by the name of "The Keneseo," soon caught his eye. Two men, whom he had not noted in his first survey of the square, were lounging upon opposite sides of the door.

"Is that yer las' chaw o' terbaccer ye've got in yer face, Bill?" demanded one of the other as Rossiter approached.

The expression was not new to him. He had heard it before among men of the class to which these loafers belonged, the class to whose level, or lower, he himself had sunk, but it now carried with it an unwonted reproach. It revealed to him with painful vividness his own position in the world, and he cursed the fate that had caused him to leave the freight-train. Illica was potent in rousing the unwelcome spectre of the past, in stirring memories that he had fancied dead or so somnolent that they would never waken to plague him, in kindling longings that he had for many a day resolutely banished.

As Rossiter drew near, and it became evident that he was seeking the saloon, the two loungers stepped back to allow him to enter, scanning him with leering curiosity as he walked towards the bar. With one hand he tossed his little bundle of clothes upon the polished slab behind which, in trousers and gauze undershirt, a close-cropped, red-faced Irish-American was standing, and with the other cast down his last precious nickel.

"A glass of beer, for Heaven's sake!" said he.

The saloon-keeper shot an amused glance at him, seized a beer-mug, turned a spigot, held the mug up, eying its contents critically,

blew off the foam, put it beneath the tap again, and then placed it before Rossiter with a flourish.

"Still hottern'n 'ell!" he remarked.

Rossiter answered with a little nod of assent, and then gave himself over to the luxury of the beaded draught. No bottle of wine quaffed in his primrose days had ever afforded him quite the satisfaction he experienced from that plebeian beer. He put the mug down with a sigh.

"Have another?" asked the saloon-keeper.

Rossiter smiled regretfully and produced his three remaining pennies, chinking them in his hand.

"Guess not," he answered.

"Oh, well," said the man behind the bar good-naturedly, "I see you're ruther down on yer luck. I'll stan' treat. They's some crackers over there," he added, pointing to a nicked dish that stood upon a table on the opposite side of the room.

Rossiter helped himself to a generous handful, and, returning, took up the brimming mug that was awaiting him.

"Here's looking at you," he said. "My best thanks."

"Goin' hop-pickin', I suppose?" said the saloon-keeper as he tossed off his "pony."

"Hadn't thought of it," replied Rossiter, who now recalled that it was the season of the hop-harvest, when there was a large influx of people into Illica on their way to the hop-fields, a dozen miles or so back among the hills.

"Thought likely ye were. They's a big crowd goin' this year. They say the crop's heavy."

An idea flashed into Rossiter's brain.

"I wonder if I could get a chance to pick?" he queried.

"Gosh, yes!" said the saloon-keeper, "plenty o' chance if ye kept sober."

Rossiter made some additional inquiries in regard to the matter of hop-picking, then, as the saloon-keeper suggested that he guessed he'd shut up, the vagrant took his bundle from the bar and sought the street.

"I might try it," he mused as he strolled aimlessly in the direction of the station. "I'll see how it strikes me in the morning."

Reaching the railway tracks, he halted for a moment in indecision. The station was closed, so it was useless to attempt to get an hour or two of rest upon one of the seats under the plea that he was waiting for a train. Turning to the left, he walked parallel with the tracks for more than thrice a score of paces, crossed a deserted street, and descried directly in front of him a freight-house, along all sides of which a platform extended. On the side towards the railway some

freight-cars were standing upon a switch. He gained the platform and began trying the doors of these cars. They were all securely fastened, however, so he slipped down between one of them and the platform, beneath which he groped his way till he found where some chips and sweepings had been thrown. Here he arranged his bundle for a pillow, stretched himself out, and was soon calmly slumbering. Night-long near him darkened express-trains went rushing by or began to slacken speed with a hiss of steam and a grating of wheels, but they disturbed him not, and when the breezeless dawn began to break he was still sleeping as peacefully as though his bed were one of luxury.

II.

ON THE BANKS OF THE MOHONDAGA.

ROSSITER's rest was broken the next morning by the rattle and creak of a hand-truck on the boards above his head. Through the open space between the ground and the floor of the freight-car just in front of him he could see the sunlight gleaming upon the rails, and so knew that it was broad day. Commonly, on awakening, he was in no haste to be stirring, but on this occasion he displayed an unusual activity. Almost as soon as he realized that the wonted round of busy men had begun, he sat up, shook the dirt from his bundle and from his clothes, and crept from his shelter. Crawling under the freight-car, so that no one about the freight-house should see him and suspect him of mischief, he stepped off briskly, rubbing the sleep from his eyes.

The air was still fresh with the cool of the dawn, but the sun was peering blar and red through the haze that curtained the heavens, and there was every indication of another sweltering day. On glancing along the street upon which the freight-house faced, Rossiter noted, not far distant, a large sign extending over the sidewalk. "*Stabling*" was the word which, years previous, had been traced upon it. As Rossiter drew near the sign he beheld a wide gate which gave entrance to a yard of considerable extent in the rear of a second- or third-class hotel. Upon the yard a long shed opened and likewise a capacious barn. In the centre of the barn door-way a hostler was leisurely grooming a horse. Towards this man the vagrant advanced.

"Can I get a job?" asked he, as he came within speaking distance. "I'd be willing to work for a bit of breakfast."

The hostler paused, currycomb in one hand, brush in the other.

"Know anythin' about a hoss?" he demanded, surveying the applicant with considerable doubt.

"Yes," said Rossiter, "something."

"Le's see."

The vagabond dropped his bundle, and the man relinquished currycomb and brush to him.

"You'll do," he said presently. "I giss ye kin earn yer brekfust all right enough." He moved away, and Rossiter heard him cleaning stalls. Then he climbed to the loft and began pitching down hay. After a little he descended, and soon appeared leading another horse.

"That'll do fer the bay," he said. "Try yer hand on this 'un."

For an hour or more the new stableman continued his labors, when the hostler announced that it was time for "grub." After a good wash at the barn pump, Rossiter followed his companion into a small, bare room which was filled with the odor of cooking. It was a plain meal that the two men sat down to, but it was exceedingly palatable. Neither spoke while eating, and the maid who attended to their wants evidently considered herself decidedly above them, for she did not deign to address them with so much as a single word. When they had finished they went out together.

"Say," said the hostler, as they halted in the centre of the stable yard, "how'd you like my job fer a couple o' weeks? I want to go hop-pickin'."

"I think some of going myself," replied Rossiter.

"Oh, you do, eh? Well, if you don't conclude to go, I'd be glad to have you come 'ere. You're a pritty tidy hand with a hoss."

"Thanks. What's the job worth?"

"Five a week, with feed an' lodgin'."

"When would you want to know?"

"Any time to-day 'ud do."

"All right. I'll drop around to-night and tell you if I'll come. If you don't see me again, you'll have to find another chap," and Rossiter sought the street.

"Here's luck!" he ejaculated. "May be things are going to take a turn at last." He straightened himself, and something of the reckless sullenness left his face.

"I must find a quiet spot and think it out," he mused.

He crossed the railway tracks, and struck into a narrow street which, he recalled, formerly led to the base-ball grounds and the broad meadows bordering the river. It was a squalid neighborhood in the old days, he remembered, and it did not appear to have changed materially during the years that had elapsed since he had last viewed it. Ragged children were rolling in the dirt by the roadside, slatternly women even at that hour—nine o'clock had not yet struck—were gossiping from window to window, and two or three men as unkempt as Rossiter himself were squirting tobacco-juice over the dilapidated board sidewalk. Both women and men eyed him furtively as he went by, and one of the former flung a coarse jibe after him.

He found an open field where the fenced base-ball grounds had been, and beyond this, as in the past, stretched a level meadow, sweep-

ing away beyond the river to the base of haze-wrapt hills. Quarter of a mile distant he noticed a group of elms upon the bank of the stream, and towards these he directed his steps. When he reached them he cast himself upon the sward in the shade and set his back against one of the massive boles. Behind him was the city, slowly beginning to steam with heat under the pitiless sun; before him was the languid river, low from drought, lazing between its irregular and freshet-washed banks. Far overhead in the lofty boughs was the faint twitter of bird-song.

This was what Rossiter loved. The city meant nothing to him but miserable failure, but the free air of the country carried with it a certain peace of spirit, and for the most part a large forgetfulness. During the three years of his wanderings the virus of vagabondage had so permeated his every fibre that he rarely longed for the existence he had once known. When he was candid with himself he admitted that it was an irreparable blot upon his manhood that he did not strive to rise from the slough into which his own weakness had dragged him. At rare intervals, when thoughts of reëntering the struggle came to him, there was always the old weakness to combat, the realization that not twice but thrice he had played fast and loose with his chances in the world, and so he allowed himself to drift. There was nothing inherently bad in Rossiter's nature; there was no dishonor to be laid at his door. If he had assumed something of the uncouth manners and familiarized himself with the low language of the men with whom he frequently associated, these were surface matters, things which, if occasion demanded, would be sloughed as a snake drops its skin. Weak though he was, and reckless though he had been when fortune was his, back of all was a fineness that those who came into anything like intimate contact with him could but notice. The lack of a mother's love and guidance, and a mistaken generosity and a subsequent obtuse insistence on the part of his father, accounted for much in the wreck he had made of everything to which he had put his hand. Born with a keen artistic sense, endowed with considerable real literary talent, his likings had always been made light of at home, and when it came to the choice of a career he had that forced upon him for which he had a positive distaste.

Then his father died; a considerable amount of money fell to him; false friends flattered and cajoled; and very soon he was penniless. His elder brother helped him to a position, but though he did his best, his apparent indifference brought about his dismissal. His sister's husband now tried to give him a lift, but the recipient soon discovered that he was a hindrance rather than an aid, and so one night, returning from his work discouraged and embittered, and being reproached by his sister for his general uselessness, he went to his room, put a few

traps together, slung them upon a stout cane over his shoulder, and walked out into the darkness, from that hour a vagabond, wandering whither fancy led, now working at this or that, now begging, suffering sometimes, but not without a certain enjoyment in life, vastly happier than he had been when he felt himself dependent on, and a reproach to, those who were his nearest of kin. Such was the story of this ne'er-do-well, a story of weakness, of folly, of heedlessness, but not one of crime or of dishonor.

Having settled himself to his satisfaction under the lofty elm, Rossiter opened the bundle which he had cast by his side—a dilapidated change of underwear, a pair of socks, a vest, and an outing shirt—and extracted a briar-wood pipe of cheap make and a small piece of smoking-plug. From the tobacco he cut with miserly care enough to fill half the pipe-bowl, and having lighted it leaned back with a sigh of comfort. It was the first indulgence of the kind he had allowed himself for several days, and the fact that he was permitting himself to enjoy so epicurean a pleasure at this morning hour indicated that something of unusual moment was occupying his mind.

After having blown, to his intense satisfaction, two or three fragrant clouds into the warm September air, he took from his pocket a square envelope, from which he drew a letter. This he spread out before him upon one knee. It read in this wise:

"DEAR PHILIP: I have heard from your former friend, Everson, that you have again been seen in or near Kalamanti, and I am sending this enclosed in a note to him in the hope of reaching you. For the sake of our dead father and mother, for your sake, and for the sake of us all, I want you to come back for another trial. Will you not? On the first of October the *Evening Star* passes into the hands of an acquaintance of mine, George Agnew, who intends making some sweeping changes in the staff. Recalling some sketches and skits you once wrote which received much pleasant comment, and the leanings you formerly had towards literature, which father (very unfortunately and injudiciously, I now believe) so insistently discouraged, I spoke of you to Mr. Agnew, who has very generously offered to give you a chance on the paper. October first, as I said above, is the date when the change in management takes place, and if, by good fortune, you receive this letter, I beg that you will not allow this (perhaps last) opportunity to retrieve yourself to slip from you. I hope that you will believe me still

"Your affectionate brother,

"ARCHIBALD ROSSITER."

"It's mighty good of Archie," commented the wanderer, "a blamed sight too good! I don't deserve it. I'd probably make a mess of it, just as I have of everything else but this," and he glanced down at his worn and dusty shoes, and at his faded and weather-stained garb.

"And yet,—well, it's what I always used to think I'd like, and here I am more than half way there."

When his brother's missive had been handed to him two weeks previous he had been upon the point of turning south. Instead he set his face eastward, not with a definite idea of falling in with what his brother had proposed, but with that possibility in view. Now, after having had the past so vividly brought before him by his unforeseen tarry in Illica, after having experienced emotions that he had fancied belonged almost totally to a different environment, he was more strongly moved than ever thus to challenge fate.

But the old weakness, the hesitancy, the dislike of responsibility, fostered by his roving life was not lightly to be overcome; so he lay and debated. Against his undoubted desire to redeem himself, a desire which was gradually strengthening, rose the consciousness of former failure, and also the undeniable fascination his present existence had come to have for him. Half an hour slipped away, an hour, and it was mid-morning. The heat increased, and the reclining man grew drowsy.

Vaguely, as in a dream, he marked two figures cross his angle of vision and follow the river bank to a point not many rods from where he was lying. He saw these persons begin to divest themselves of their clothes, commented to himself that they were going for a swim, and here his scarcely aroused curiosity ceased. He closed his eyes and presently lost consciousness. Twenty minutes had elapsed when a scream rent the quiet air, a sharp, boyish cry of terror. At the second outcry, louder and shriller than the first, Rossiter sat up. A naked form was leaping wildly about upon the river bank, with arms out-flung, sending forth one terrified shriek after another. To Rossiter's ears the shouts now resolved themselves into,—

"Help! help!"

The awakened man was on his feet in an instant. In such an emergency as this his habitual indecision did not show itself. Off went his cap, coat, and shoes, and away he sprang over the sward towards the distraught figure. He was naturally fleet of foot, and his muscles were hard from hundreds of leagues of tramping.

The youth, for such Rossiter saw the shouter to be, grew more frantic as he realized that aid was approaching, turning first towards the stream and then in the direction from which assistance was coming.

"Oh, quick! be quick!" he cried, but now his voice seemed to fail him, and he did little more than utter a series of incoherent sounds.

Once within view of the river, Rossiter was not slow to grasp the situation. In mid-stream was a bather, who, by a spasmodic action of one hand, was just contriving to keep his head above the surface. He was swallowing great gulps of water with every movement, and was unquestionably on the verge of sinking.

"Stick to it!" yelled Rossiter, without slackening speed, "I'll be with you in a minute."

One spring took him down upon the caked mud below the overhanging sod, and a second carried him waist deep into the river. Then he struck out with vigorous strokes. He approached the exhausted swimmer cautiously, knowing if he would save him he must not allow himself to be caught in his drowning grip. When just beyond the reach of his arm he paused. The poor fellow made a frantic effort to seize hold upon him, but Rossiter was watchful and easily eluded his grasp. It was like the last flicker of a dying flame. With a gasp and a gurgle the man gave over the struggle. Here was Rossiter's opportunity, and he was alert to improve it. As the sinking bather's head was disappearing he gave a powerful forward plunge. Out went his hand, and his strong fingers were fastened in a mop of soaking hair. There was but a spark of consciousness left in the body of the man when Rossiter jerked his head above water. He was well-nigh a dead weight, and his rescuer had no difficulty in whirling him about and gripping him beneath the armpits. In this wise he pushed him ashore. He began to revive a little as shallow water was reached, and was able, with Rossiter's arm encircling his waist, to drag himself up to the grass of the bank, where he sank in a limp heap. Presently he began to vomit violently, whereat the boy who had been standing by, mouth agape and speechless, commenced to moan and whimper.

"It's the best thing that could happen," said Rossiter reassuringly. "He'll come around all right shortly."

Indeed, it was not long before the rescued man sat up, a look of disgust and loathing upon his features.

"Mother of Moses!" he exclaimed, "but I shouldn't want Mohondaga water for a steady diet!"

He caught Rossiter's eye and smiled wanly.

"You were just in time," he said. "Jim, there, ain't worth shucks. He can't swim a stroke. Another minute, an' I'd 'a' croaked."

"It was rather a close shave," observed Rossiter.

"Gee, yes!" This was said with considerable emphasis, and a suspicion of color began to creep into the young man's pallid cheeks.

He was perhaps twenty-six or seven years of age, and as Rossiter now glanced from his face to that of the boy, who had edged close to him, he saw at once from the strong resemblance between them that they must be brothers, the younger being hardly more than sixteen. They were not unattractive faces, either of them, and in the elder's Rossiter read lines of determination and self-reliance that made him for the instant envious. Both were slimly fashioned, with a slight stoop to the shoulders, and both had the lifeless complexions of those who spend little time in the open air. They had clear eyes of steel-blue,

and the hair of the elder curled slightly. He had, moreover, an insignificant brown mustache.

"Come out in the sun," said Rossiter to the one he had rescued; "it'll brace you up."

He gave the young man a helping hand, and steadied him after he had got upon his feet.

"Cripe, but I'm weak!" the whilom swimmer said. "You wouldn't think it 'ud take it out of a fellow so," and he sat down near where he had laid his clothes.

Rossiter now began to realize the condition of his own garments.

"I believe I'll have to wring my things out," he remarked, "and let them dry in the sun," and he proceeded forthwith to put this scheme into execution.

For a space little was said, the two brothers absently watching the vagrant as he spread his worn articles of apparel upon the grass. Finally the elder spoke up quickly.

"How'd you happen along just as you did?" he inquired.

"Oh, I was having a nap over yonder," answered Rossiter, waving his hand in the direction of the elm under which he had been reclining, "and I heard your brother shout."

"Having a nap, eh?" this with considerable surprise, as though the speaker could not understand the philosophy of a mid-morning indulgence of that character.

"Yes, but"—with a swift shift of the topic of conversation—"you haven't told me what was the trouble with you out there," and Rossiter nodded towards the water.

"Oh, a cramp caught me. I must have been too warm when I went in. It doubled me all up on one side, and I called to Jim, who was paddlin' about in shallow water. He ran out onto the bank scart stiff, and began yellin' like mad. It's darn lucky he did, I guess."

At this the younger brother laughed foolishly.

"Say," continued the elder, "you've done me a blamed good turn——"

"Don't mention it," said Rossiter, interrupting him.

"But, by gosh, I'm goin' to!" cried the young man. "What do you take me for? Now, as I say, you've done me a good turn, and I'd like to do you one, if you'll let me."

He looked at Rossiter appealingly.

"Well," said the latter.

"You're in hard luck, ain't you? No offence meant."

Rossiter lowered his eyes.

"Suppose I am?" said he.

"Got anythin' at all to do?"

"I had an offer this morning."

"Somethin' that you care about?"

"I can't say that it is."

"Come along with us, then!" this with a sudden enthusiastic burst of confidence. "My mother 'nd sister 'nd Jim 'nd me's goin' hop-pickin'. We've just come up this mornin' from Fallsburgh down the river where we live, and are goin' into the country this afternoon. Fine place, bully 'grub', 'nd all that! A chum o' mine was to have been along, but he backed out at the last minute, so it'll be all o. k., won't it, Jim?"

"Sure!" exclaimed the boy.

Rossiter was more than surprised at this spontaneous proposal. He was not accustomed to gratitude, and that he should inspire anyone with enough confidence to suggest such an arrangement struck him with something like amazement. But the more he meditated upon the suggestion the more tempting it was to him. Three weeks and a half had yet to elapse before the first of October. If he should decide to return and accept the offer made by his brother's acquaintance, here was an opening which would enable him to go back with a little money in his pocket, doubtless more than he could earn as a hostler.

"It's mighty good of you to mention such a thing," said he. "Are you sure you really mean it?"

"Mean it!" echoed the young man,—“well, I guess!”

"Then I'm with you!" exclaimed Rossiter, surprised the instant he had spoken at his own earnestness and decision.

"My name's Joe Becraft," said the young man, "and this is my brother Jim."

"Mine is Philip Rossiter,—Phil, if you like," said the vagabond, and then he was suddenly conscious that he had given his full name for the first time in three years. Ross he had been accustomed to call himself when there was any question of identity.

"Is it a good omen," he asked himself, "or is it but the beginning of another failure?"

III.

OFF FOR THE HOP-FIELDS.

"You see it's like this," Joe Becraft was saying as the three trudged slowly in the blazing sun across the meadow towards the city. "The mill where I've been workin' these six years, an' where Jim's just startin' in, has shut down a month for repairs, so we're gettin' a holiday. Ma always goes pickin' hops, an' Mame,—she's my sister,—but Jim an' me, we ain't so lucky every year."

"You like it then?" inquired Rossiter.

"You'd better believe I do. So'd you if you were shut up in a mill all the rest of the time."

"Haven't you a good position?"

"Oh, yes, I'm not kickin'. I'm under-overseer in the cardin'-room. I'll get to be overseer, perhaps, one of these days, an' then——" He broke off. There was a happy look in his eyes and he gave a little laugh, while Jim chuckled audibly.

"What are you snickerin' at, you young jay?" cried his brother, making a pretence of being provoked, and vainly trying to cuff the offender.

The more Rossiter talked with the elder Becraft the more did he grow to respect if not to admire him, he was so wholly natural, so independent, so self-poised, and yet so entirely without conceit. He was uneducated, save in a rudimentary way, having been the mainstay of the family for eight years, yet he kept himself informed on the topics of the day, and had his opinions on public affairs, which were more free from bias than the views held by most of those in his station in life. Crude he was, but earnest, frank, and warm-hearted, and Rossiter was shamed when he contrasted his own weakness and lack of purpose with this young fellow's unassuming strength.

As the three reached the square beyond the railway tracks, Rossiter noticed that Joe Becraft was beginning to lag and show signs of exhaustion.

"You'd better have a drink of whiskey to brace you up," he said.

"A milk-shake will do the business," Becraft replied. "It's too hot for whiskey. May be you'd like a nip, though," he added, with a peculiar sidelong glance, which the vagrant caught. It was as though the younger man was surmising what the elder's habits might be.

"Oh, no," Rossiter said, not betraying the fact that he noticed Becraft's scrutiny, "I'm not much on whiskey myself. I like a little beer now and again, however."

"Yes, beer ain't bad, but the shake is what I need now. I feel a bit empty."

They stopped at a small corner drug-store, where all three had the drink which Joe Becraft craved, though the clerk looked askance when he came to serve Rossiter.

"My mother's waitin' at the Cottage Hotel," said the elder Becraft, when they again stood upon the sidewalk. "That's where the hop-wagon's to come for us about two o'clock. Now before we go up, for we want you to come along with us, I've got something to propose. You'll take it all right, won't you?"

"Perhaps I know what it is," answered Rossiter, for several times he had seen Becraft furtively regarding his hair and beard.

"Do you?"

"I can guess."

"Well, if that's the case, you ain't a-goin' to mind, are you? You can pay me back, you know."

"You'll trust me to pay you back, then?"

"Trust you to? Why, of course I will. You'll pay me if you've got anythin' to pay with, an' you'll have it all right after a little."

"I don't believe there are many who would take your view of it."

"P'raps not, for, to tell the truth, you ain't what the boys would call 'a swell.' But a shave an' a hair-cut'll make a sight of difference. I know of a place close by where we'll go. A chap from our town keeps it."

As they turned from the main thoroughfare, which was called Keneseo Street, a puff of warm wind blew a cloud of dust in their faces.

"Thunder!" ejaculated Joe Becraft, "I've swallowed enough nasty stuff for one day. Do you know," he added, "for a decent city, this town is one of the dirtiest goin'! 'Tain't as bad as it used to be, but it's plenty bad enough."

Rossiter was not posted in the matter of municipal street-cleaning, so he did not reply to these observations. They had not walked more than a block when they saw a barber's striped pole, and entered a little shop where a dapper young man, with elaborately brushed hair and a not over-clean white duck jacket, was making change for a customer whom he had been shaving.

"Hullo, Joe!" said this individual, "what are you up to?"

"Oh, the mill's shut down for a few weeks, an' I'm off hop-pickin' with the family," answered Becraft. "Friend of mine, here," he continued, indicating Rossiter, "wants you to fix him up."

The barber's attention was for the first time directed to the companion of the Becraft brothers.

"Say——" he began.

"No jollyin', now," interrupted Joe. "He took an oath a while ago that he wouldn't get a shave or a hair-cut till you cleaned your streets properly, but he's backed out."

The barber exploded in a guffaw.

"Lucky for him he has," he answered, "unless he means to hire out to Forepaugh or Buffalo Bill as the wild man of Borneo."

While Rossiter's locks were being trimmed and his beard removed, Joe Becraft and his tonsorial friend kept their tongues continually wagging. Their conversation had chiefly to do with the town of their nativity and a certain portion of its inhabitants, and Rossiter listened with not a little inward amusement, for each young man had, in his way, a sense of broad humor that flashed out in their comments upon people. Finally the barber's task was accomplished, and he removed the soiled apron from Rossiter's neck with a flourish and a,—

"There you are, sir!"

"Gosh!" Joe Becraft exclaimed, "I wouldn't believe you were the same fellow."

The change in the vagabond's appearance was indeed great. His rather large, clear-cut features showed to an advantage without beard or mustache, and though the lines of his chin indicated a lack of decision, one studying his face for the first time would have said that its possessor was endowed with a strong individuality. His deep brown eyes were laughing and grave by turns. The discontent and bitterness which showed in the expression of his mouth were not to be seen habitually. Dissipation had left no mark upon his countenance, for although at times Rossiter had imbibed freely, he was very far from being a drunkard; indeed, he had no special taste for liquor, and had frequently resorted to it not so much because he craved it as because it took him out of himself.

Becraft produced some silver and paid his townsfellow.

"It's my treat to-day," he explained.

They now retraced their steps to Keneseo Street, and followed this thoroughfare until they came to the elaborate lift-bridge spanning the Ontario Canal. From time to time Becraft regarded his new friend speculatively.

"Say," he at length broke out, as the three paused and leaned over the railing, idly scanning a steam-packet that was moored below, "you've been used to a different sort of life, haven't you?"

Rossiter did not reply at once.

"Yes," he said finally.

"Had an education, an' all that?"

"Yes."

"I thought so. You don't talk like,—well, like most of the people I know."

"I'm not aware of any difference."

"Oh, yes, you are. That is, you would be if you'd stop to think about it."

"I got through thinking some time ago, at least I so imagined until lately."

"You know, an education," said Becraft, not heeding Rossiter's last remark, "is something I'm always wishin' I had. It's a great thing."

"I've certainly not done very much with mine," replied the wanderer.

"How'd it happen?"

"It's hard to say. I don't doubt another—you, for instance—would have profited by it, but as for me——" He ended with an expressive shrug of his shoulders.

They continued to look at the steam-packet for several minutes longer, and then resumed their walk towards the Cottage Hotel.

"Don't b'lieve we'd better say anythin' about my swimmin' ex-

perience to Ma, Jim," observed Joe Becraft, as they left the main street for the narrower thoroughfare where the hotel they sought was situated. "Like as not she'd have a blue fit."

"Bet she would," replied Jim.

"She's pretty nervous about my health sometimes," Joe explained. "You see, father died o' consumption."

"Why should you ever say anything to her about it?" inquired Rossiter. "Certainly, so far as I am aware, there's not the slightest reason for your doing so."

"Oh, but I want her to know some day what you did for me. I'll tell her about it up in the hop-yard. She won't take on so there. I mean, she won't give it to me quite so strong about bein' careless, an' all that."

"Have it as you will," said Rossiter, "but I should be rather better pleased if you made no mention of it whatever."

"I'm goin' to introduce you," said Joe, "as a friend who's done me a good turn. That'll explain our fetchin' you along."

Rossiter now descried in the distance the staring letters—"COTTAGE HOTEL"—above a large and rambling wooden building, so he intimated that before he met the mother and sister of his companions he would like to make a slight change in his apparel.

"I've got another shirt in here," he said, displaying his bundle, "that looks more presentable than this one I'm wearing."

"Ma ain't over particular," said Joe, but as Rossiter insisted, they turned up at the side of the hotel and sought the stables, where the vagrant made the desired alteration. He could but smile to himself as he was effecting this, the experience was so novel to him. It was many a long day since he had given much heed to what anyone thought of him.

The hotel stood upon a corner, and on two sides of it there was a wide veranda, at one end of which mother and daughter were sitting. The girl was a plain, shy miss of seventeen, while the mother proved to be a woman of ample proportions, with a worn but kindly face which showed that her path through life had not been among the roses. Her manner towards Rossiter was at first marked by a decided reserve, but when her son explained that he was indebted to "the gentleman" for a very particular favor, she thawed perceptibly, and later, when Rossiter contrived to compliment Joe while the latter was not listening, she quite beamed upon him, and thereafter the new-comer was fully established in her good graces. Though her experience in the world had been limited, like her elder son she was a person of observation, and treated Rossiter with something akin to deference, detecting in him a superiority of breeding.

It was not long before the clock in the City-Hall not far distant

proclaimed the hour of noon, a fact that was reiterated by sundry whistles of different tone in various parts of the city.

"You might as well be gettin' the lunch out, Mamie," said Mrs. Becraft to her daughter. "I presume the boys are ready for it, we had such an early breakfast."

Rossiter now rose, remarking that he would join them later.

"No, you don't," announced Joe Becraft. "You ain't goin' to run off like that. We've got enough for ourselves an' two or three more. Besides, you'll mortally offend Ma if you skip out when they's any eatin' goin' on. She'll take it as a slight to her cookin'."

There was a general laugh at this, and as Mrs. Becraft assured Rossiter that her son knew her failings, he was without much difficulty persuaded to resume his seat. Mamie Becraft soon emerged from the hotel parlor (thus designated by a little strip of painted tin fastened above the door) bearing a capacious basket, which was found to contain an abundance of bread and butter, doughnuts, and cookies. Joe darted across the way and purchased a bag of peaches from a fruit vender, and then the *al fresco* feast proceeded with much gusto.

"You see what I have to provide for, Mr. Rossiter," said Mrs. Becraft, smiling at Jim, who was rapidly making way with his fourth fried-cake. "But, dear me, their appetite now is nothin' to what it will be when we get into the hop-fields. I don't know what Mrs. Merton will say when she sees how her pies an' things disappear. Did you ever hear of the Mertons? It's to their place we are goin', you know."

"He's goin' too," put in Joe.

"Oh, indeed! I didn't understand," said Mrs. Becraft. "I suppose mebbe you're acquainted with the people?"

"No, I'm not," said Rossiter.

"Well, Mr. Merton is one of the largest hop-growers near Hintonville. His farm is about two miles and a half from the village."

"You've been there, then?"

"Yes, last year, Mamie an' I, but the boys never have."

Soon others began to arrive at the hotel, and by half-past one as many as twenty-five people—men, women, boys, and girls—had gathered on or about the piazza. A few were acquaintances of Mrs. Becraft and her daughter, and there was a slight interchange of talk. A subdued air of expectancy, however, pervaded the company, and the eyes of many, of the male portion more particularly, were constantly turned in the direction of Keneseo Street. Just before two there was a cry of "Here he comes!" followed by a general movement towards the railing on the part of those upon the veranda. Over the heads of two boys who had crowded in front of him Rossiter beheld a long wagon with seats running longitudinally, drawn by two powerful horses, moving leisurely towards the hotel. The driver, perched upon

a seat considerably higher than the body of the wagon, swayed from one side to another as the clumsy vehicle rattled over the cobble-stone pavement, the smooth asphalt having not yet been laid in front of the Cottage Hotel.

"It's Jack Parmelee," Rossiter heard Mamie Becraft say to one of her brothers. "He's Mr. Merton's brother-in-law, an' oversees the farm."

The individual in question, an energetic appearing man of about forty-five, his hat pushed back upon his head, the dust clinging to his brown beard and causing it to seem flecked with gray, presently pulled his horses up before the hotel and surveyed those gathered upon the sidewalk and veranda.

"All here?" he demanded, his gruff voice sounding as though it might have proceeded from his boots. "Well, pile in!" he added, not giving anyone time to answer. "Any trunks?"

Those who had belongings hastened to load them into the wagon; then there was a good-natured scramble for seats. Rossiter assisted Joe with the two satchels and large basket containing the possessions of the Becraft family, and then found himself seated between the two brothers, with Mrs. Becraft and her daughter opposite.

"All right there?" inquired Jack Parmelee, surveying the load from his superior height with a glow of satisfaction.

"Right!" cried someone.

"Get up!" cried the animated Jehu. The big horses braced themselves; the heavy wagon moved; and the journey to the hop-fields was begun.

IV.

AT THE MERTONS'

It was a long and wearisome ride. There had been a protracted season of drought, and beyond the city the fields lay scorched and sere, while a white coating of dust covered everything by the roadside. Even the leaves of the trees, motionless in the sultry air, seemed burnt and lifeless. Overhead hung a blazing sun. As they plodded forward, the horses being unable to move faster than a walk, owing to the heavy load, clouds of dust rose about them. The very atmosphere was permeated with floating particles, and the distance was blurred and vague.

For nine miles the road ascended gradually, part of the time following the course of the abandoned Susquenango Canal, part of the time in close proximity to the track of the Suswego and Eastern Railway. There was little conversation. Occasionally one of the young men near the driver's seat was heard to berate the heat in a subdued, hopeless fashion, and there was a rare interchange of chaff between these same young men and a lone yokel shouting from a farm-yard by

the highway. Once or twice a pugnacious shepherd dog rushed out and barked at them, but no one gave heed to the implied challenge.

It was nearing five o'clock when they reached the shady park at Hintonville. Very familiar this spot looked to Rossiter, for it was at the institution situated upon the lofty hill a mile and a half from the pretty little town that he had spent the four years of his college life. There was the church in which he had once taken part in a prize contest before an audience made up chiefly of beaming and fluttering maidens and their escorts. How very far away it all seemed! Quite like another existence. And he was coming back to the scene in a hop-wagon! It was not much as he had pictured his return when he had lingered one night in the moonlight alone by yonder fountain a few weeks before his graduation.

He glanced about as they passed up the residence side of the park, thinking he might recognize some of the townsfolk, for he had known quite a number of the citizens when he was in college, but there were few to be seen, and among them he distinguished no one whose figure he remembered. Beyond the trees and the strip of greensward, a baggage-man was driving at an ambling gait in the direction of the station, but it was not the eccentric little Irishman, "Barney," who had been wont to deliver his trunk in the old days at the top of three flights of stairs with so many remarkable expletives. A feeling of disappointment and loneliness seized upon Rossiter, a sense of being apart and aloof from all the rest of the world. This was the one place of all places where he had felt that there was sure to be some one to greet him cheerfully should he ever return, yet he beheld no one who stood out clear in his memory. Doubtless there were those whom he would know and who might recall him, but they were not in evidence, and he had expected that they would be.

Joe Becraft noticed the dejection in his face, and, misunderstanding the cause of it, appealed to his mother to know if she had not said that their journey's end was but a short distance beyond Hintonville.

"Well, it ain't an awful sight farther," she answered, "but it's mostly hill."

Mrs. Becraft had been wielding a large, loosely jointed fan energetically for most of the nine miles they had traversed, and was well-nigh in a state of collapse. A little rill of perspiration was making its way down her rounded face just in front of each ear. There was a ring of heat about both of her eyes, and yet she did not complain.

"You look about done up, Ma," said her elder son, transferring his attention from Rossiter.

She smiled at him resignedly.

"I don't know's I'd care to go on many more miles like this," she said. "I guess we'll all be glad to get there."

Some of the young men were anxious to pause for a drink of beer, but the driver informed them that if they did so they would have to follow on foot, as he should not wait, consequently no one quitted the wagon. As they left Hintonville behind the ground began to rise in a long slope, for instead of pursuing their way along the valley in which the town nestled they bore to the left towards a lofty range of hills. The sun was slowly westering, and beyond the brooding vale where the winding Oskenton flowed, on the crown of the first abrupt rise Rossiter saw the slanting rays kindle to golden fire the spire and vane of the old college chapel. At the sight of the shifting wind-indicator one of his student pranks flashed into his mind, a thing that had dropped from his memory for years,—how in the lazy spring afternoons he used to place a chair in the deep window of his bedroom and, having lowered the upper sash, pepper away with his revolver at the veering arrow.

"Now that I'm so near," he thought, his eyes still upon the spire and the trees that hid the other college buildings, "I must walk over some Sunday and have a look at the dear old place."

A little breeze sprang up as they ascended, stirring the leaves in the apple-orchards, and causing the foliage of two ancient poplars that towered where the road forked to glisten here and there like quicksilver.

"Do you see those trees?" exclaimed Jack Parmelee, suddenly turning to his weary wagon-load. "Well, from the way they act we're goin' to have rain afore to-morrow mornin', an' a mighty big blessin' it'll be too!"

A peacock with spread tail paraded its vanity before them as they passed this point, and as they were bending to the right gave a long, raucous cry which was the occasion of a vast amount of amusement among many of the young people who had never heard the bird's peculiar call before.

"Now we're sure of it," said Jack Parmelee. "Mister Peacock's an authority on the rain question. It's luck all around,—better hops an' better pickin'."

"What good'll the rain do the hops now?" one of the prospective pickers inquired. "They ain't goin' to grow any more, be they?"

"It'll cool the air an' keep 'em from mouldin'. I've been mighty scart of 'em for a day or two," answered the driver. "Such a spell o' heat raises thunder with 'em sometimes."

Several hop-fields had already been passed, and there was now a yard upon either side of the road. Everyone began to regard the vines, each pole with its hops like a swarm of bees at the top, with an increased interest. When these fields had been left behind Mamie Becraft and a number of others commenced craning their necks as though they thought that their destination must be in sight.

"There's the house!" cried one.

"I can see the hop-kiln!" exclaimed another, and in spite of the uncertain motion of the wagon over the stony road several mounted the seats for the purpose of obtaining a better view.

"Yes," Jack Parmelee remarked, "we're about there, and I reckon supper'll be ready."

This announcement was hailed with various comments of satisfaction. The jaded horses seemed to realize that they too were about to be rewarded for their part in the tiresome journey, and struck into a brisker walk. Everyone forgot, for the instant, the heat and the discomfort, and became animated and alert. Rossiter caught something of the excitement of the moment, and rose partly from his seat as the wagon approached a large, white farm-house set midway in a spacious yard. In front were several tall locust-trees. In the rear, upon the nearer side, stood the barns, the hop-kiln with its queer ventilator upon the top, and various other out-buildings. Beyond, there appeared to be a garden and orchard, while directly opposite was a huge hop-field.

As they entered the yard a robust, smooth-shaven man came out upon the piazza at the side of the house, closely followed by two women. The man, who was in his shirt-sleeves and wore a ribbonless wide-brimmed hat of straw, paused with his lips parted in a smile, his hands upon his hips, and his feet spread wide, and surveyed the wagon-load. The women, sisters evidently, slender, kindly faced, and rather short of stature, shaded their eyes and examined the new-comers with curiosity and interest.

"There's Mr. and Mrs. Merton," said Mrs. Becraft to Jim. "That's Mrs. Merton this way; the other's her sister, Miss Parmelee, who lives with 'em. They's a daughter, but I don't see her."

"All right, Jack?" asked Mr. Merton, descending the porch-steps.

"Yes, all right," returned Parmelee, leaping from his perch and giving himself a shake.

"Must 'a' had a pretty warm an' dusty drive."

"Golly, guess we did!"

"Get right down, all o' you," said Mr. Merton. "Mrs. Merton will look after the women, and Jack, here, will take care of the men. Hey, boys!" he cried, motioning to two farm-hands who were standing in the door-way of the horse-barn, "hurry up and give us a lift."

It was a great relief to Rossiter to stretch his cramped limbs. As he glanced about, he saw evidences of thrift everywhere, in the neat yard, in the trim sheds, in the overflowing mows, and in the recently painted, ramblingly spacious house. His vagabond experience had trained his eye in these matters, and he could usually read from exteriors what treatment he was likely to receive. Here he knew that he should fare well. He was already glad that he had decided to come.

Having seen the hop-wagon unloaded and the team led away by one of the farm-hands, and having watched the women and girls disappear in Mrs. Merton's wake, Rossiter whirled about to find the male portion of his companions gathering up their possessions preparatory to following Jack Parmelee. He had his own small bundle in his hand, and having joined the Becraft boys, who had been assisting their mother and sister, the three went forward together. Mr. Merton's right-hand man led them along the driveway to the rear of the house, where he struck into a path which traversed a small orchard that was separated by a high picket fence from one much more extensive. At the left-hand lower corner of the lesser orchard, and within a stone's throw of the farm-house, was a long, rather low one-storied building.

"Here's your sleepin'-quarters," said Jack Parmelee, throwing open the door and revealing a double row of snowy cots. "You'll have to do your washin' up to the barn. I'll show you after you pick your places and stow your traps," and therewith he left them.

The floor was scrupulously clean; there was mosquito-netting at all of the windows; and there were three lamps, with reflectors, for lighting the room. Rossiter and the two Becrafts secured cots at the farther end of the apartment, and then, having made themselves acquainted with the basin and towel arrangements at the barn, went in to the large kitchen, which had been cleared for an eating-room, to a plentiful supper.

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked Joe Becraft, as he and Rossiter strolled, smoking, down the road in the afterglow, having satisfied to the full their by no means slender appetites. "I say it's the slickest thing I've ever struck, by long odds."

"I don't fancy we shall find much to complain of, unless it's the hop-picking. What's that like?"

"Oh, that's fun. There's no work about it. All you do is just to strip the hops from the vines, that some chap called a 'pole-puller' brings you, an' chuck 'em into your box. You mustn't put many leaves in, though. They don't like that."

"It doesn't sound difficult."

"Difficult! Well, no; but I can tell you it's quite a trick to pick so that you can turn out your three boxes a day. They used to allow you to put some leaves in, an' then a fellow could manage four or five, but now it's different. They're darn particular."

"Let's see, what do we get?"

"Thirty-five cents a box an' 'grub.' If you boarded yourself, you'd probably get fifty. They usually have a lot o' people who pick after that fashion come up from Hintonville, so I understand. That's how they manage in most yards hereabouts."

"I'm really quite keen on it," said Rossiter, with a touch of Joe's enthusiasm.

"You must try an' get at a box next to ours. You see four boxes are generally joined together, made so, consequently they's only room for our family at one of the combination things," announced Becraft.

"Oh, that's how it is!"

"Yes, that's the way they work it."

The little breeze that sprung up just before their arrival had died with the going down of the sun, and the fever of the day was still in the air. Far away beyond the western hills a black cloud was beginning to invade the sky, and Rossiter concluded that the prophecy of the silvering poplar leaves and the trumpeting peacock was likely to be fulfilled before morning. In the parched and dusty grass at the roadside a cricket chorus was ringing clear and cheery, and a late locust was violining in the stubble of a barley-field. They walked for perhaps half a mile before they turned, Becraft commenting in his frank way upon the pleasure he was anticipating in his sojourn of two or three weeks in the hop-fields, and telling Rossiter of the monotony, the colorlessness, of his ordinary daily life.

"Do you know," he said, with a wave of his hand, "if it wa'n't for somethin' like this every year or two, I'd be a fit subject for an asylum. It often seems, when I leave the mill at night, as though I was never goin' to get the clatter o' machinery out o' my head. I hear the wheels hummin' in the dark, an' see the straps spinnin' round an' round. Then I begin to think o' the country, the smell o' things,"—and he drank in the pungent aroma of the hop-fields with infinite content,—“an' after a while I'm all right. There's nothin' like havin' somethin' free an' healthy to look forward to.”

"You'd thrive on a farm, wouldn't you? Haven't you ever thought of trying it?"

"Oh, yes! But there's no money in farmin' unless you've got a goodish-sized place, an' then my girl,—I've got a girl, you know," he interjected,—“she don't take much stock in livin' out away from folks.”

Reticent as Rossiter was in regard to his own affairs (and he felt that he had good cause to be), it was very pleasant to have this young man, to whom he had been an utter stranger until that morning, talk to him in this confiding strain. It made him have a new and surprising sense of half-confidence in himself.

As they were silent for a moment, they became conscious that a vehicle was approaching behind them. They glanced back, and saw not far distant, and drawing near at a rapid rate, a pair of large sorrels attached to a light surrey. They retreated farther into the grass at the road-edge to avoid the dust from the passing carriage,

and, glancing up as it swept by, observed that it contained a driver and two young ladies. The one who sat upon the side nearest them let her eyes rest upon them for an instant, then she, her companion, and, indeed, the whole conveyance, were lost in a whirl of dust. Rossiter watched the travelling cloud until the horses and the surrey emerged from it at the Mertons' gate.

"Did you notice that girl?" remarked the younger of the two men.

"Yes, I did."

"Gee, but wa'n't she a hummer!"

"She certainly was," agreed Rossiter, amused at his companion's tribute to feminine beauty.

The calm of the growing dusk now cast its influence over them, and there was little said as they retraced their steps to the farm.

V.

AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

A GRUFF clamoring from without, and a tremendous thumping on the side of the building, awakened Rossiter the following day. The unusual sensation of finding himself in a clean and comfortable bed created for a brief space a great wonder in his mind, and it was not until he espied Joe Becraft sitting upon the edge of his cot yawning and stretching himself that he became fully aware where he was lying. The instant he scrambled out upon the floor he knew that the air had changed during the night, for a fresh breeze swept in at an adjacent window. Drops of rain glistened in the pale dawn on the grass where it was not sheltered by the trees, but Rossiter discovered when he went towards the barn for a morning scrub that it was only the edge of the shower that had touched the Merton farm. The atmosphere, however, had cleared and the dust was laid, so that everyone was in excellent humor.

As he came out from breakfast with the Becrafts two men were bearing the last double hop-box into the yard across the way where the picking was to begin. Presently Jack Parmelee appeared and announced that everything was in readiness, whereat there was a general movement towards the yard. The women and girls had provided themselves with great sun-hats and cotton gloves, and Rossiter observed that some of the boys had also procured a protection for their hands.

"Does one need gloves of any sort?" he inquired of Joe Becraft. "I don't see that you have any."

"Jim an' I never use 'em," was the reply. "If the vines bother you at first, you'll find your skin'll get toughened to 'em after a little."

Jack Parmelee had the apportionment of the pickers, and at Rossiter's request he was placed at a box adjoining his friends, where he could talk across the rows to them. He had for his companions a car-

penter from Illica who was out of a job and his wife and son, a boy of Jim Becraft's age. He fell into pleasant conversation with them, and as they had frequently been in the hop-fields before, they gave him such simple instruction as was necessary in regard to picking. Shortly after operations began an additional fifteen pickers arrived from Hintonville, and the scene became an animated one. Cries of "Hop-pole!" rang up and down the field. The pole-pullers, with their hop-dogs (an instrument for pulling poles consisting of a toothed clamp attached to a stout strap hung about the neck), hastened hither and thither supplying the needs of the pickers, stripping and stacking the poles as fast as the hops were removed from the vines. Acquaintances shouted greetings and gossip from one box to another. Then, as the sun grew high, awnings were suspended for those who objected to the heat.

Rossiter thoroughly enjoyed it all. The odor of the hops was delightful to him, and ere long he found his fingers growing nimble, so that he was gratified to see from the pile in his box that he was holding his own fairly well with his fellow-toilers. By and by, shortly after half-past eight, some one shouted "Hop-sack!"

"My goodness!" exclaimed the carpenter's wife, "that's quick work! They must have 'dumped.' Suppose we try it, Ben, and see how much we've got."

To "dump," Rossiter discovered, meant to empty the hops from one partially filled box into another, so that they should have less time to settle. The carpenter at once proceeded to carry out his wife's suggestion, but when he had finished they still lacked two inches of having one level box.

"Let's hustle," said he, "perhaps we'll get the second." They made their fingers fly, and soon he too was yelling "Hop-sack!"

Jack Parmelee speedily appeared with several bags of coarse stuff under his arm, into one of which he emptied the hops from the now brimming box. Then he handed out a strip of card-board upon which was printed

ONE BOX OF HOPS.

RICHARD E. MERTON.

This the carpenter, with much evident satisfaction, slipped into one of the pockets of his vest. By eleven o'clock Rossiter also had the pleasure of pocketing one of these little tickets, and he began wondering

how many he should be able to accumulate during his tarry at the Mertons'.

The afternoon picking had been but a short time in progress when Rossiter noticed two farm-hands crossing the road carrying a hop-box arranged for two pickers. This was placed a few rows in advance of his own. Erelong he saw two girls emerge from the house and come towards the hop-field. A glance told him that they were not ordinary frequenters of the hop-harvest, and then it flashed into his mind that they were the young ladies who had passed Joe Becraft and himself the evening before. As they advanced he had an excellent view of them, for he was facing in the direction from which they were approaching. The one whose beauty he and Becraft had remarked upon was tall and slight, and carried herself with a singular grace and charm. The great hat which shaded her features and was tied beneath her chin showed her countenance as though in a frame,—the delicately arched brows, the appealing eyes, the refined and sensitive mouth. Her skin was unnaturally pale, as though from illness, yet she betrayed no further evidences of ill-health, laughing and chatting with the one who accompanied her in an animated way. The other girl—Rossiter judged that both might be twenty-four or five—was much shorter and plumper than her companion. There were roses in her cheeks, and while with some she would hardly have passed as pretty, there was about her a wholesome attractiveness.

Rossiter was tempted to turn and watch them, but restrained himself from doing so. He chanced to look towards the Becraft box and caught Joe's eye. That young man gave a little emphatic nod of his head which told its story of admiration.

"I shall have to threaten to report to his sweetheart," thought Rossiter.

"What can they be doing in the hop-yard?" he mused.

His unspoken query was answered an instant later by the carpenter's wife, who said to her husband,—

"That's Miss Merton, the one with the red cheeks, and the other's a Miss Densmore, a cousin of the Mertons from Illica, who's come out to pick for her health. I heard Mrs. Merton tell someone so last night."

During most of the afternoon the face of Miss Merton's cousin was before Rossiter, although he did not actually see her again till towards the time for the picking to cease, when she and Miss Merton passed on their way to the house. It was her eyes especially that haunted him,—the searching tenderness in them. That he should dwell upon her thus was quite as ridiculous, he confessed to himself, as was Becraft's display of susceptibility. Rossiter had long considered women, at least those of the class with which he had once associated, as having

gone out of his life forever. Indeed, from the time, a year and a half before he had cut loose from his kin and all social ties, when, on learning that his fortune had vanished, the girl to whom he had given his heart had thrown him over, he had regarded the sex from an isolated stand-point. The love of beauty in its many forms which had been born in him, and which no series of experiences could eradicate, had often, in his vagabondage, riveted his attention upon a lovely woman, but he had always considered her from the artist's position. That, after all this time, a face should so take hold upon him struck him with a sense of the preposterous, he who had sunk to the level of the veriest dregs of humanity—a common tramp. He was inclined to shout aloud with mirth.

Two days before he would have sworn that such a thing was beyond the bounds of possibility, but even in the life of a vagrant two days may work strange things. The moment his feet touched the ground at Illica the change began, and Rossiter, regarding himself impersonally, began to wonder if he were actually the same person who stowed himself in the freight-car at Clevalo not a great many hours previous. Something that he could not analyze was crystallizing within him. Another, more familiar with the workings of the brain towards that which is resolute, fixed, and definite, might have recognized it and called it purpose.

As Mrs. Becraft desired an errand done in Hintonville, after supper Joe got a ride into the village with one of the hired men who was going for the evening mail. Rossiter, left to himself, wandered down into the great orchard below the small close where the men's sleeping-quarters were. A wagon-track led through it, and he followed this till he reached a meadow that dipped gently to a dense strip of woodland. Far away in the west the streamers of the sunset laced the sky. Leaning against the fence-rails, he watched the splendor fade, filled with a more uplifting sense of spirit than he had felt in many a day.

With the shutting down of dusk he walked slowly back towards the house. As he drew abreast of the hop-kiln he saw two men seated in the door-way whom he made out to be Mr. Merton and Jack Parmelee.

"We've done very well for the first day," Parmelee was saying. "Only had one piece o' bad luck."

"What's that?" inquired Mr. Merton.

"Why, young Gridley, who was pullin' poles, claims he's got to quit. He ain't very strong, an' he says he can't stand it."

Gridley—that was the name, Rossiter recalled, by which he had heard the slender fellow addressed who pulled for his box and that of the Becrafts.

"What'll you do?" demanded Mr. Merton. "Pole-pullers are mighty scarce this year."

"We'll have to try an' break in one of the pickers, I suppose."

One of the pickers!—the words rang in Rossiter's ears. Why not himself? Certainly he was strong enough, and, he flattered himself, clever enough. He was very sure that he could acquire the knack of pole-pulling quickly—knack, it was evident, had much to do with it. He had watched the young man whom Jack Parmelee had named a number of times that afternoon, as he groaned over lifting an obstinate pole, and told himself that he did not believe he should make such a to-do.

He walked on several paces, meditating the while. Pole-pulling was much harder work, doubtless, than picking hops, but then the pay was more. If he were going to turn his back upon his old ways, he might as well begin whole-heartedly. He wheeled swiftly towards the two men seated in the door of the hop-kiln. They ceased speaking as he drew near, and realizing that his mood might change if he beat about the bush Rossiter went straight to the point.

"I overheard you say," he began, "as I was passing just now, that you are going to be short of a pole-puller. I'd like to have a chance at the job, if you'll let me."

"Let's see," answered Parmelee, leaning forward to scan Rossiter's face more closely, "what's your name? I don't seem to recall."

"Rossiter."

"Oh, yes! Come with the Becraft boys, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"Ever pull poles?"

"No, I never have, but I was watching the chap named Gridley, of whom you were speaking,—he pulled for my box to-day,—and I think I can do as well as he."

Parmelee looked Rossiter up and down. Then he rose and felt of his arm.

"I guess you'll do," he remarked, with one of his gruff chuckles. "I'll show you the trick in the mornin'."

"Thank you," said Rossiter, turning away.

"Obliged to you," answered Parmelee. "Glad you spoke about it. Helps me out considerable."

Rossiter walked from the farm-yard with a sense of elation. His blood seemed suddenly to pulse more swiftly, and mounted to his head like wine. He paused an instant at the gate, wondering if Joe Becraft had returned, thinking to tell him of the step he had taken, but Joe was not among those who were loitering there. He glanced up and down the road, debating which way he should stroll, not caring to join his gossiping fellow-pickers. One addressed him, but he replied briefly and moved to the right, in the direction opposite from that which he and Becraft had taken the evening before.

"Rum feller, that," said one of those at the gate.

"Yes," said another, "sort of a cross 'tween a tramp an' a dude," a remark which evoked a burst of merriment.

Rossiter felt that he was the subject of their mirth, but this realization did not lower the pitch of his mood. He smiled, put his shoulders back, and swung away briskly into the dusk. He was conscious that he was rapidly putting off his indifference. It did not occur to him to doubt his ability to succeed in the work which he had elected to undertake on the morrow. The waxing half-disk of the new moon cast his shadow before him, and in this and the chirr-song of the crickets there was sufficient companionship. He was glad he had not found Becraft.

After he had proceeded thus alertly for half a mile, the highway dipped sharply into a wide and deep vale that was packed with the dense shadows of night. Beyond, upon an opposite crest, a group of fir-trees thrust their dark pyramids into the sky. Rossiter had no mind to plunge into this gloomy void, so he seated himself in a fence corner above the road, his back against the rails, where he could watch the climbing moon, and lighted his pipe. He was more free with his tobacco now that he actually had something like steady employment.

In the darkness not far distant a wood-thrush was sending up its final evening flute-notes. Rossiter listened to the rapt soloist, having no thought of the past nor of the future, conscious only of the present. When the bird ceased singing there was still the orchestral music of the crickets for his delectation. The moon was well risen in the heaven by the time his pipe burned out, yet he had no desire as yet to return to the farm. The vale below had gradually emerged from its obscurity and was brimmed with moonlight like an enormous bowl. He fancied he could make out the forms of grazing cattle, and caught the silvery moon-sheen upon running water. The half-distinct panorama held him until his attention was taken by a sound which he presently made out to be the footfalls of a pedestrian plodding along the road from the direction of the Mertons.

The large, slouching figure of a man at length came into view. Directly opposite where Rossiter sat the wayfarer paused. A wide-brimmed felt hat so hid his face that all Rossiter could distinguish was a stubbly beard. The whilom tramp at once set the new-comer down as one of the indigent fraternity to which he had so recently belonged, and, having no desire for speech with him, did not move. But the man in the highway, halted as Rossiter had been by the vast dip and sweep of the land, cast his eyes about as if for a spot to rest before going farther. On the reclining form upon the bank, clearly revealed by the moonlight, his glance naturally fell.

"Hullo!" he said in gruff surprise.

"Hullo!" returned Rossiter reluctantly.

"Campin' fer the night?"

"No, not exactly."

"Room fer two, partner?"

"I haven't a mortgage on the place."

The man had moved several steps in Rossiter's direction, but the tone from the fence-corner had not been especially cordial, and he now stopped.

"Got any terbaccer about yer?" he inquired, as a means of renewing the conversation.

"None to spare."

"Huh!" said the man, "you're not very damn friendly."

He pushed back his hat, and for the first time the moonlight fell full upon a countenance that if once seen was not likely to be forgotten. It was tawny-bearded almost to the close-set eyes, and the effect was at the same time fantastic and repellent.

"Whiskers!"—Rossiter's lips unconsciously framed the name by which this man, Hart Dawson, was commonly known among his associates. The mind of the younger vagabond reverted with swift distinctness to a certain chilly night in the Arkansas bottom-lands when he, with Hart Dawson and a pal of the latter, had sought shelter in a rough lean-to. Chance had made the three companions, and they had shared fortunes for several weeks. In the heart of that bitter night Rossiter had wakened, bitten to the bone by the cold, to find himself alone, the thick coat which he had wrapped about him gone, in its pockets the few small coins which he possessed. It was a sharp experience, and while Rossiter was not one of the sort to cherish a grudge, he had reason to bear the man before him small good-will.

His first impulse, born of the keen recollection of the suffering of that night, was to assail Dawson there and then, and have revenge in some sort, if he might, for the contemptible theft and desertion. He controlled himself, however, and made no effort to rise, hoping not to be recognized. But the working of his lips and his very apparent emotion did not escape the notice of the man in the road. He leaped up the bank, and, not knowing what to expect, Rossiter felt compelled to get upon his feet. So in the fence-corner they faced each other, the one curious, aggressive, bulky, and brutal; the other tense with restrained passion, alert, and sinewy.

"Blast me," ejaculated Dawson, his unexpressive countenance showing amazement and discomfort in so far as that was possible, "if it ain't Charlie Ross!" This was the name that some of his wandering companions had jocularly given to Rossiter.

"Well," said the latter coolly, "what then?"

Dawson quickly recovered his composure.

"Ye don't seem glad to see me," he remarked.

"I've had greater pleasures."

"Oh, come now, Charlie, what's the use o' standin' off like that with an ole pal? 'Twan't me so much as it was Lanky Bill as done ye dirt. Let's patch it up. You're bound fer Waturbury, I take it, where they've made a camp fer the boys, an' are feedin' 'em good 'grub,' an' so am I. Let's toddle along together like friends."

Rossiter's hands were clenched at his side. A cold rage was growing on him at the man's effrontery.

"Where I am going," he said icily, "is my own concern, not yours."

The two measured each other steadily for several seconds, their eyes upon a level, for they were of equal height, and then Dawson's glance shifted.

"Ye always held yerself too cussed good fer common folks," said he.

"You'd better move on, 'Whiskers,'" said Rossiter.

Their eyes met again, and presently Dawson drew back a pace, and finally descended to the highway.

"Ye can go to hell, fer all o' me," he remarked, and shambled off down the road towards the valley.

VI.

THE NEW POLE-PULLER.

As Rossiter came out from breakfast the next morning, which was Thursday, he found Jack Parmelee awaiting him.

"I was lookin' for you," said Mr. Merton's factotum. "We'll go over ahead of the rest, an' I'll show you how it's done."

They crossed the road together, Parmelee swinging a hop-dog in one hand.

"You ain't a farmer," said he, eying Rossiter.

"Not exactly," answered the latter, "though I've often done farm work."

"Well, there's a dum sight worse things than farmin'. You don't catch me shut up in a shop peddlin' calico an' jew-jaws to a lot o' fussy women."

"Yes," Rossiter assented, "the open air is the natural place for a man."

"None o' your town life for me!" said Parmelee. "There's too much blamed noise; too many pesky people about."

"Perhaps I should have been a farmer," said Rossiter. "I'm not particularly fond of racket and a crowd."

"You've lived in a town, though; that's plain enough to see."

"Yes," said Rossiter, with a nod. "How'd you guess it?"

"Oh, it's easy to tell. In the first place, you don't talk like a countryman."

They had reached the hop-field by this time, and made their way to where the box in which Rossiter had picked was standing.

"You'll pull for these three boxes," said Parmelee, indicating the one near them, the one where the Becrafts had been, and the half-box which Miss Merton and her cousin had used. "The girls won't trouble you much. They're pickin' for health or pleasure, whichever you've a mind to call it."

Parmelee now swung the strap of the hop-dog about his neck, and after cutting the vines of one hill very close to the ground proceeded to show Rossiter how the pole should be loosened.

"Oh, you'll make it go," said he, having seen his pupil lift two poles with seeming ease.

Rossiter was then instructed in regard to stripping the poles after the hops had been picked, and in stacking them in Indian-wigwam fashion by making a basis of four poles fastened together by a piece of vine about three feet from the top and then spread wide apart at the bottom. Just as the lesson was over the pickers began to cross into the yard. Rossiter had said nothing to the Becrafts in regard to his new departure, thinking it would be rather good fun to surprise them. He was bringing a second pole to lay across the end where Mrs. Becraft and her daughter picked when the family approached, Joe leading the way.

He observed Rossiter and came to a dead stop.

"What in thunder are you up to?" he demanded.

"Can't you see?" said Rossiter. "You've got a new pole-puller."

"Well, I'll be blowed!" Joe exclaimed, while the others expressed their astonishment in various small outcries; "I thought you'd never been in a hop-yard before?"

"This is my first experience, I assure you," said Rossiter, and then he informed them how the change had come about.

"We'll make you hustle!" cried Joe, breaking off a long branch from the end of a vine and beginning to strip the hops into the box. "You'll wish you'd never seen a hop-pole before night."

"I'll risk it," returned Rossiter good-naturedly, moving away to attend the other pickers who were under his care.

Work had been going on for an hour or more when Miss Merton and Miss Densmore appeared in the field. Rossiter spied them coming, and had a pole ready for them when they reached their box. Both girls recognized him by a slight inclination of the head, and he replied to their salutation by removing his cap.

"We've a new pole-puller, I see," commented Miss Merton, with a certain pretty air of proprietorship in everything that was going on. "I hope you won't find it so hard as Mr. Gridley seemed to."

At this instant Joe Becraft set up a shout of "Hop-pole!" so Rossiter thanked her for her kindly wishes and hurried away.

"What a polite pole-puller!" exclaimed Miss Merton when Rossiter was out of hearing. "Who is he, I wonder?"

"Aren't pole-pullers usually polite?" inquired Miss Densmore, smiling a little. "I thought the one of yesterday was very attentive to our wants."

"Yes, he was, but there is a difference even in pole-pullers. Did you notice the way this man took his cap off? Why, you might have been bowing to some one on Keneseo Street!"

By and by Jack Parmelee paused a moment to chat with the two girls.

"How does your new pole-puller get on?" was the first question he asked.

"Oh, beautifully!" responded Miss Merton. "Do you know his name?"

"'Rossiter' is what he calls himself."

"That sounds rather ambiguous. Do you think that isn't his name?"

"No, I've no reason to think so."

"How'd you get hold of him? He doesn't work about here. I understood all the pole-pullers were men from near by."

Parmelee then explained how he had happened to employ Rossiter.

"He came with the Becrafts over yonder," he added, indicating them with a nod, "mill people from Fallsburgh. Very likely he's a mill-hand, but I don't care what he is so long's he looks after you an' the rest. We're mighty short o' help. Well, I declare," he concluded, glancing into Miss Densmore's box, "if you ain't makin' a picker! Miriam's nowhere."

"I don't talk as much as Miriam does," said Miss Densmore demurely.

"You can," cried that young lady, "only you won't!"

"I don't think it's at all likely 'at she can," said Jack Parmelee, with a grimace. "'Tain't possible! But here!" he exclaimed suddenly, "I can't waste any more valuable time on you two," and off he posted to a distant part of the yard, where a stentorian voice was bawling "Hop-sack!"

Rossiter thoroughly enjoyed ministering to the wants of the two girls. It had been many a long day since he had been thrown into even the remotest contact with women of refinement, and though he had little speech with Miss Merton and her cousin, he had plenty of opportunity to observe them. Occasionally the former addressed a remark to him or plied him with a question, feeling free to do so as Mr. Merton's daughter, but he held himself scrupulously aloof unless his services were required, and was careful to say nothing unless he was first spoken to. Miss Merton's sunny temperament and gay spirits

pleased and amused him, but he found Miss Densmore's personality far the more attractive. Furthermore, to him she was fairer to look upon. Her complexion was remarkable for its clarity. Now and again, when she was speaking, in her cheeks a faint flush like the tint of the briar-rose blossom would come and go. Her eyes, of the deepest blue, met those of the person with whom she was conversing with an open and confiding glance. Constancy was mirrored in them, and they seemed like twin wells of purity and truth. One little lock of her hair, in which the sunbeams ambushed, had a way of escaping from its confinement, and, crinkling across her brow, lent a soft witchery to her face. Her voice rippled in sweet modulations, and her laugh, which was never loud, had in it a beguiling contagion.

"Gettin' acquainted?" asked Joe Becraft that afternoon, as Rossiter tarried an instant by the box where the Becraft family were busily engaged.

It was not the first remark of the sort that Joe had indulged in, and it jarred on Rossiter, he hardly knew why. Becraft's previous familiarities had not touched him in this way. He was well aware that it was natural for Becraft thus to express himself, and that what he said was meant wholly in good part, but inwardly he resented it; and while he endeavored not to show this in his reply, Joe was quick to see something was wrong, and thereafter was more careful how he referred to Miss Merton and Miss Densmore.

During the two days that followed Rossiter was quite as cautious as at first not to address any conversation to the two girls unless they invited it. The free-and-easy life of the hop-fields, however, soon made itself felt in their intercourse, and when Miss Merton and her cousin discovered that their pole-puller was intellectually their equal, whatever he might be from a social point of view, they often chatted freely with him during the occasional intervals when he was not busy and chanced to be standing near. They began, moreover, to have considerable curiosity concerning him, for despite his rough clothes it grew to be evident that he had sometime been accustomed to a different environment from that in which he was now placed.

"I don't believe he's a mill-hand at all," announced Miss Merton, during one of the talks the two had concerning him.

"You speak as though you had an intimate acquaintance with the workers in mills," Miss Densmore returned with some amusement.

"Well, mill-hands don't pick you up when you misquote Shakespeare," and as though she regarded this as proof positive that she had established her point, Miss Merton branched off upon another theme.

When Saturday night came Rossiter proposed to Joe Becraft that they should walk into Hintonville together. Before starting he approached Parmelee, into whose good graces he had rapidly advanced

by the admirable way in which he had performed his work, and requested that he be paid the amount due him for his labor.

"It's not accordin' to our custom," said the jovial manager, "but as long as I'm pretty reasonably sure it isn't whiskey you're wantin' to spend it for, I don't mind seein' that you're accommodated."

"With such a pair of shoes the only ones I possess," said Rossiter, pointing to his dilapidated footgear, "it isn't very likely the money'll go for drink."

Both men derived much pleasure from their walk. They found the streets of the little town bright with purchasers and strollers come in from the country, and in the shops Rossiter saw a number of faces that he recalled from his old college days. After having liquidated the small debt he owed Becraft, he invested in a pair of stout shoes at a sale that chanced to be in progress, and also in a cheap razor and a few toilet articles. He then had exactly a dime remaining.

"Just enough for two beers!" he exclaimed, pitching the little silver disk into the air and catching it as it descended.

Joe protested against his spending his last cent, but Rossiter insisted that it was "his treat," so the two went into the bar-room of the Hintonville House, where the desired beverage was speedily forthcoming. As Rossiter placed his empty glass upon the bar a bacchanalian college ditty which he used occasionally to roar through the streets with a few choice and congenial spirits (a ditty which embalmed the name of a former proprietor of the Hintonville House), unrecalled for years, went lilting through his brain,—

"Down to Powers' we will go,
Let the lager freely flow,
Then go reeling to and fro
Back to Alma Mater!"

It had a very rakish sound, but it had never meant much more than the natural outburst of the exuberance of youth.

With the recollection of the college song came the thought of the college, and he decided that on the morrow he would make a pilgrimage to the scenes of his student days. Accordingly, Sunday morning, soon after he had breakfasted, he slipped away and set out. The autumn term had not yet opened, and he knew he should have the campus practically to himself. Reaching Hintonville, he left the village square behind, and turned westward along the extensive maple-shaded street that led to the base of the hill on the crest of which the college buildings were situated. Upon the old stone bridge spanning the swiftly flowing Oskenton he paused, as he had so often done before, to watch the dancing water, the swaying willows, and the changing lights and shadows. Then he went on up the long, steep slope.

Now he saw changes on every hand. Buildings belonging to the

various college fraternities were dotted along the hill-side where, in his day, there had been open fields. He looked for a grape-vineyard that an injudicious husbandman had persisted in cultivating to the vast delight of the students, but it had disappeared. The little wooden arbor half way up the hill had been replaced by a more imposing structure built in part of hewn stone. He saw the venerable form of his favorite professor, apparently untouched by the lapse of the years, sitting beneath his tree-embowered porch, and the desire was strong in Rossiter's heart to go in and take him once again by the hand, but a glance at his own attire, threadbare and weather-stained, though he had succeeded in freshening it somewhat, restrained him.

It was with a thrill of pleasure that he came, just before reaching the hill-crest, to the row of ancient Lombardy poplars, stately trees that had defied the winter winds for well-nigh a century. They had a greeting for him. "Here we are," they seemed to say, "just as we were when you tramped up and down beneath us, and we're glad to see you back." They, at least, did not notice the altered appearance of the erstwhile spruce young man.

A flood of recollections swept upon him as he turned into the campus. Here there were new buildings and a more prosperous air than of old, but the general effect was the same, and struck Rossiter more than ever before as beautiful and impressive. The hall in which he had roomed was locked, so he roamed on, wandering about at will and meeting no one, better pleased to have it so, finding ample companionship in the talking trees and in his own memories. By and by he strayed down into the college burying-ground, a little hedge-girdled God's-acre just under the brow of the hill, where some of the college worthies and a few students who had gone from life while yet undergraduates slept their long sleep. It was an ideal spot, full of the deepest peace. In the lower corner, where the trees opened and revealed a vast sweep of country as far away as the Deerbrook Hills beyond the Mohondaga Valley, Rossiter cast himself upon the sward. Here he lingered for more than an hour, and when he rose to leave there was a sense of contentment in his heart that was strange to him, and the light of a firmer resolve shone upon his face.

VII.

THE SPRING AT THE WOOD-EDGE.

"WHERE in the deuce did you slope to?" inquired Joe Becraft as Rossiter took his seat at the dinner-table when the meal was more than half through.

"I went for a walk," replied Rossiter. "I didn't see you anywhere about, and didn't know anyhow that you would care to go after our long tramp of last evening."

"I wish you'd waited an' come along with Jim an' me," said Becraft, "instead of pokin' off by yourself."

"Where did you go?"

"Over to Blue Creek."

"Blue Creek! where's that?"

"You follow the road that passes the house for half a mile or so, an' it brings you out above a big gulf through which the creek flows. It's a fine stream. Trout in it too, they say."

"I'll go over with you next Sunday, if you like," said Rossiter, recognizing from the description the place where he had met Hart Dawson on Thursday night.

Joe had seemed rather hurt by Rossiter's desertion, but was appeased by his promise for the coming Sunday, and when they rose from the dinner-table they went together into the upper orchard for a smoke. They found a comfortable spot in the long grass, and stretched at full length, their pipes drawing just to suit them, the leaves rustling softly above them, a catbird in an adjacent thorn-bush scolding and singing alternately, they enjoyed in a brimming measure the lassitude of simply existing. By and by Becraft sought his cot for a nap, and Rossiter was left alone. Presently he caught sight of Jack Parmelee near the hop-kiln, and, hailing him, asked for the loan of something to read. Parmelee procured him a paper and a cheap magazine, and with these in hand he strolled to the bottom of the large orchard. Not seeing any nook here that took his fancy, and being attracted by the woodland beyond the meadow, he loitered towards it along a clearly defined path that ran parallel to the fence for some distance and then swerved obliquely to meet an opening in the forest. As he neared the wood he discovered that the ground fell away quite abruptly, and at the base of the declivity near the gap in the trees (this proved to be the entrance to an old logging-road) was the most crystal of springs shaded by a gigantic willow. Beneath this had been placed a rustic seat.

"Jove!" he exclaimed, "I've hit upon it this time!"

There was a glass upon a flat stone at the brink of the spring, and Rossiter refreshed himself with a deep draught from the cool well-head. Then he took possession of the seat, tried several positions, and finally leaned back with a sigh of satisfaction. It had been days since he had read a line of print, and of reading he had been always passionately fond (indeed, in his roving he missed books more than any other luxury), yet he was now in no hurry to open magazine or paper. The spot appealed to him as so idyllic he preferred to enjoy its sylvan beauty. Just before him there was a short vista where the logging-road penetrated the forest. Soon this woodman's highway curved, however, so that he had no glimpse of the heart of the wood. The overflow from the spring, with its small, timbrel-like voice, followed

the bend of the road, and on its edge, a few yards distant among the trees, a late cardinal-flower displayed its scarlet robe. A woodpecker struck up a loud tattoo, a squirrel suddenly grew garrulous and then lapsed into silence, and far away from remote swampy recesses came a faint wailing as though a plover cried.

Having brooded to his satisfaction on his wild environment, Rossiter turned first to paper and then to magazine. He was glancing with idle curiosity at the faces of some of the people of the day prominent in public view when he fancied he caught the sound of voices. Half rising, he listened with intentness. Yes, that was Miss Merton's merry chatter and Miss Densmore's answering laugh. He could not see them, for the ridge behind him hid them from view. They were doubtless coming to the very place where he had been reclining, and would be disappointed if they discovered the seat had an occupant. He could not retreat along the logging-road without being noticed, and he did not wish that they should observe him. Just at his left, however, was a hazel-copse that offered concealment. It occurred to him that he could slip into this, and then, by making a little detour, strike the woodman's track below where it curved. A stroll of exploration appealed to his humor, and he was quick to put his idea into execution, so when the two girls arrived at the spring they found their possession of its lyric seclusion undisputed. After they had ensconced themselves comfortably upon the seat, Miss Merton opened the book which she had brought with her, uttering an instant later a cry of chagrin.

"How utterly stupid of me!" she said, showing the page to her cousin, "it's the wrong story."

"Oh, never mind!" said Miss Densmore.

"But I do mind!" cried Miriam. "It was so perfectly foolish of me not to look. I knew the two novels had exactly the same covers. I'm going back for the other. You'll not be afraid to stop for a few minutes alone?"

"Why do you trudge back through all the heat? It isn't worth while. Not that I care"—glancing about her a little doubtfully—"because I shall be left alone."

"It was so absolutely silly of me that I'm going," said Miss Merton, and she hurried up the slope.

Rossiter, in the meanwhile, had picked his way with much caution through the thicket, gained the more open wood, though everywhere there was considerable undergrowth, and come out upon the logging-road. He walked on for perhaps a hundred paces, when he emerged into a little glade where the rillet from the spring joined a larger brook. Here a fallen tree made so inviting a resting-place that he seated himself, intending to resume his wanderings after a few moments. As he glanced aimlessly about him he spied a small hickory sapling of arrowy

straightness which he fancied he would like for a staff; accordingly he took from his pocket the large knife with which Jack Parmelee had supplied him for cutting hop-vines, snapped back the single blade, and approached the miniature tree. He had bent it over and made the first deep incision, when a woman's scream—unmistakably a cry of terror—penetrated with startling clearness the forest quietude, and it came from the direction of the spring.

So quickly did Rossiter leap back that the boughs of the released sapling had no chance to whip his face. Into his pocket went the knife,—he was sorry afterwards he had not kept it in his hand,—and he raced up the wood-road with the speed of the runner who overcame Atalanta. When he had compassed half the distance between the glade and the bend another scream rang out, more full of fright, it seemed to him, than the first. In vain he strove to quicken his pace. He was already sprinting at the top of his bent. Just before he reached the turn he was conscious that someone was running towards him, but who it was he could not see, owing to the undergrowth. He heard gasps of labored breathing, and then Miss Densmore appeared before him, wild-eyed, her hair half unbound, her face, despite her exertions, as pale as bleached linen. Behind her, not more than ten feet distant, his repellant countenance exultant, rushed a man—"Whiskers!"

The girl did not on the instant recognize Rossiter, and a moan of despair escaped her. She slackened her speed for just a breath in her uncertainty, and Dawson's outstretched hand almost gripped her shoulder. Then it flashed upon her who this was before her, and with a glad cry she sprang towards him. Intent upon the girl, her pursuer had given Rossiter no heed, and suddenly found himself in that young man's grip and was hurled backward with such force that he stumbled and fell upon the sword.

"You damnable hound!" the pole-puller cried, standing over him with clenched fists.

"Whiskers" made no response, but returned Rossiter's infuriated gaze with a disgusting leer.

"Get up!" commanded the young man.

The vagrant rose slowly to his feet, let his eyes rove furtively first to one side and then to the other, as though it were his intention to take to his heels, and then suddenly sprang with an enraged snarl at Miss Densmore's rescuer.

"Want her yerself, do ye, Charlie? By God, ye sh'n't have her!"

So sudden was the onslaught that Rossiter would have been overborne had he not suspected some such movement on Dawson's part and been in a measure prepared. He shifted his position slightly to meet the attack, and swung out with a blow which, had it landed fairly, would have given the ruffian his quietus then and there. It was turned

aside, however, by an uplifted arm, and the next moment Rossiter felt a steely clamp upon his throat. He tore away his assailant's hand by a desperate effort, but he had cause to remember those terrible fingers for days afterwards. The two men now stood eying one another, and as Rossiter moved a step to gain a firmer foothold, for the ground was uneven and spongy, he was conscious of Miss Densmore not far distant crouching against a tree.

"Don't stand there!" he cried to her. "Run, for God's sake!"

He had come to realize that, strong as he knew himself to be, the strength of the man confronting him was something greater. The searing grip upon his throat told its startling tale. And, moreover, he had not to deal with a creature moved by the ordinary human emotions, but with a roused and infuriated beast, terrible with a beast's unrestrained passions.

The sound of Miss Densmore's footsteps was the signal for Dawson to renew his attack. His hairy face was lowered, and seemed to sink between his shoulders. With powerful arms outstretched he hurled himself towards Rossiter like a hideous ourang-outang. There was no mistaking the gleam in his eyes. In his present mood to come within the grasp of those arms meant a speedy closing to life's chapter.

"Run!" cried Rossiter once more to the girl.

He would at least so manage the encounter that Miss Densmore would have an opportunity to get beyond the clutches of this monster, provided she would avail herself of the brief respite he could offer her. Had the reaction from her fright rendered her incapable of fleeing? He did not dare look about as he leaped agilely now this way and now that, eluding the raging creature who pursued him, but the thought that she might still be crouching not far away, too exhausted to fly, gave him intense agony of mind.

Suddenly Dawson turned from him with an oath, leaped the adjacent rivulet, and plunged into the wood. But little more than fifty yards distant Rossiter was aware of Miss Densmore's retreating figure. He too crossed the little stream at a bound. Dawson flung a look back over his shoulder. In the race he had perhaps fifteen feet the advantage, but Rossiter was the more nimble, and the gap between them speedily narrowed. Soon the two men were not more than five feet apart, and then Dawson tripped and sprawled headlong. The root upon which he caught his foot, like a wary wrestler, flung him sideways. His crown crashed against a tree-trunk, and he collapsed into an inert mass. The pole-puller, thinking him dead, bent over him, to discover that he was only stunned.

Stooping above the repulsive and evil face, an itching crept into Rossiter's fingers to seize the hairy throat and choke out the foul life once for all. Then a question smote him, and he started back. Would

the path he had followed until so short a time previous ever have led him to become such a loathsome thing? He shuddered. With this later thought that which had cried "murder" in his ears slipped from him. Now he recalled Miss Densmore, and glanced quickly about. A score of yards away stood the girl, her figure tense, her eyes burning upon him in the green gloom. He hastened towards her.

"Is he dead?" she asked, almost in a whisper, as he drew near.

"No," he returned, "and more's the pity!—though perhaps I shouldn't say it,—he's only stunned."

She made no reply, but began walking forward by his side unsteadily. He saw that she was shaking from head to foot, and he did not know what to do or say. Would she bear up? he wondered. It was sheer grit that was keeping her from giving way, that was evident. Why didn't her cousin appear? Where was she all this time? If she had returned to the house for any reason, it was taking her unconscionably long to make the trip there and back, it seemed to him.

All at once Miss Densmore turned her drawn face, into which the blood now flooded, towards Rossiter.

"Oh, I can't thank you," she began, "there are no words——"

He cut her short.

"I did nothing," he said. "Fate, or whatever you like to call it, protected you. But how did you chance to be alone?"

"Miriam—Miss Merton—went up to the house for a book. We had come down to the spring at the wood-edge to read, and by mistake she brought the wrong novel. She insisted on going to change it."

"Sylvia! Sylvia!" a voice, in which there was a note of alarm, cried at this juncture.

"Yes, here I am," responded Miss Densmore, and an instant later she and Rossiter stepped into the logging-road a short distance from the spring and its shielding willow-tree, beneath which Miss Merton was standing.

VIII.

THE HOP-DANCE.

THAT Miss Merton should regard her cousin and Rossiter with amazement was but natural. On both their faces something unusual was written, on Miss Densmore's exhaustion and the lingering traces of a dreadful fear, on Rossiter's a mingled sternness and solicitude.

"What has happened?" Miss Merton cried.

"Your cousin has had a terrible fright," said Rossiter quickly.

He paused and glanced at Miss Densmore. He had spoken thus that she might be saved an explanation if she did not feel that she could make one just then. She gave him a grateful look as she sank upon the seat before the spring. For a moment she gazed at the welling water, then she put her hands to her face and began to sob softly.

In an instant Miss Merton's arms were about her cousin, and Rossiter, turning his back upon them, moved a few paces away. If the ghost of a longing that it might be his right to comfort the distraught girl came into his heart, he put it quickly from him. She was not for such as he to soothe with any endearing or assuring words. Though he had no fear that the motionless form in the woods would recover to molest them, he fell to watching every bough-sway and every leaf-stir intently.

"Mr. Rossiter!" called Miss Merton presently.

"Yes," he replied, swinging about and facing her.

"Will you walk back with us?"

"Certainly, if you wish it."

"It would be so good of you," said Miss Densmore, who looked as though the least jar might snatch her from consciousness. "I am not quite sure of myself."

Miss Merton upon one side of Miss Densmore and Rossiter upon the other, they slowly climbed the slope towards the orchard. For some moments nothing was said. Gradually, however, Miss Densmore regained her self-control, and at length she turned to Rossiter.

"Will you tell me how you chanced to be in the wood?" she asked.

"I had strolled down from the house with a newspaper and magazine which Mr. Parmelee lent me," he replied, "and was sitting in a little glade a short distance down the logging-road when I heard you cry."

"I must explain to you——" she began.

"Don't, Sylvia, don't now!" interrupted Miss Merton, and Rossiter added a gentle remonstrance.

"Yes," said Miss Densmore, "I must, then we'll not refer to it again. I was watching the water ripple away into the wood when I fancied I heard a footstep. I was so startled that I sprang up, and there was that man. He could not have been more than thirty feet from me, he had crept up so noiselessly. I have no idea from which direction he approached, but when I first saw him he was standing behind me in the path by which we came. He began to move towards me, and I cried out to him to go on about his business. He gave no heed to this, so I ran to the other side of the spring, putting the depression and the water between us. He was grinning at me, and oh, his face!—I am afraid I shall dream about it, and if I do I shall go mad."

She seemed about losing her power of restraining her feelings, and both Miss Merton and Rossiter again begged her to say no more, but she would not heed them.

"No," she exclaimed, "let me tell you and have it done with! He began manœuvring now so that I should not run towards the house, and he succeeded, for my foot slipped as I was leaping the outlet to

the spring, and he would have seized me had I not fled down the logging-road."

She paused, and Rossiter caught at the opportunity to end all talk on so distressing a theme.

"I chanced to be in the logging-road, as you have heard me say," he put in quickly, addressing Miss Merton; "there was some scuffling between myself and Miss Densmore's pursuer, who finally stumbled and struck his head against a tree, where we left him unconscious."

They had reached the orchard by this time, and paused a brief space to let Miss Densmore rest. A few hop-pickers were lounging beneath the trees, munching the mellow fruit. They stared at Rossiter curiously, seeing him with the two girls, and exchanged idly speculative comments.

"Well, if that chap ain't a slick one!" one remarked. "I wonder how he worked it?"

"Give it up," said another. "I wish he'd tell us."

"He won't, never you fear. It's too good a thing."

"Suppose you ask him how it's done."

"An' git a smash in the 'mug'? Not much!"

The three were now walking on, and the observant pickers noted that they paused as they came to the hop-kiln.

"You'll hardly need me farther," Rossiter was saying, with a smile, for all had been making an attempt at gayety.

Miss Densmore extended her hand.

"Don't thank me!" he exclaimed, fearing she might try to frame some expression of gratitude.

Her lips quivered, and though she did not speak, he read in her eyes her unuttered feeling.

"Father and mother will have to know, but it will be better, I think, that no one else should," said Miss Merton.

"I should not dream of mentioning the matter unless you wished it," Rossiter said, and with a grave salutation he left them.

As he had walked by Miss Densmore's side he had determined that as soon as he saw the girls in safety to the house he would tell Jack Parmelee what had happened, and with him, and perhaps Joe Becraft or some other, return to the wood and secure Dawson, if he were still unconscious, or give pursuit in case the vagrant had recovered and taken himself off. But he now recognized Miss Merton's wisdom in desiring that the affair be kept quiet. The publicity which would, of necessity, be given to it all in case Dawson were caught and haled back to the farm would only serve to keep what had occurred fresh in Miss Densmore's mind, and that she might speedily recover from the shock it was best that nothing in connection with the scene in the wood be reverted to.

Towards evening Mr. Merton sought him out, and poured upon him a stream of grateful and, to Rossiter, embarrassing praise for his conduct. It was only when he launched upon a perhaps excusably profane denunciation of Dawson that the late wanderer began to feel comfortable in his presence. Gratitude in any form, as has been previously indicated, Rossiter was very far from being accustomed to. Whenever he was able to render a service it was his nature to do so free-heartedly, and neither to ask nor to desire a recompense of any sort. He knew, generally speaking, that he had little to give, but to that little anyone in need was wholly welcome. This was one of the man's most attractive characteristics. Yet in time gone by it was this very quixotic open-handedness that was in a measure responsible for his downfall.

During the next two days neither Miss Merton nor her cousin appeared in the hop-yard. On Tuesday, as he was coming from dinner, Rossiter chanced to see the former standing alone upon the porch, and ventured to inquire for Miss Densmore.

"She's feeling much better to-day," Miss Merton said. "Sunday night we were very anxious about her, fearing a return of the fever from which she recently recovered, but I'm sure there's no danger now. We shall be out shouting 'Hop-pole!' to you again very soon."

Miss Merton's prediction proved to be true, for on the following afternoon Rossiter saw the two girls coming towards the yard.

"Your holiday's over now," said Joe Becraft, near whom he chanced to be standing, with a little grin, "but I don't s'pose you mind."

Rossiter laughed good-humoredly, and hastened away to have a pole in readiness for the returning pickers. Indeed, he did not mind. Quite the contrary. Though he would hardly admit it to himself, the hours had many of them dragged sadly since Miss Merton and her cousin had been absent from the hop-field, and he felt a thrill of pleasure at their approach which it was useless to attempt to repress. Whither was he drifting? he asked himself.

Both girls greeted him with frank friendliness, and though he endeavored to maintain his former reserve, neither of them would have it so. Miss Densmore seemed quite herself, and as for Miss Merton, she was in the gayest of gay moods.

"Of course you've heard about the hop-dance!" she exclaimed. "It's to be one of the largest we have ever had. Sylvia's never seen one, and she's very curious about it. You're familiar with hop-dances, I suppose, Mr. Rossiter?"

"No," said Rossiter, "I can't say that I am."

In his college days a number of his companions were in the habit of attending these rustic frolics, but it chanced that he never had accompanied them.

"What! Why, how funny! But I forgot, you're not a farmer, are you? Well, you'll have a chance to see what a hop-dance is like. I've asked a few friends up from Hintonville, and we are going in for a grand good time, aren't we, Sylvia? We are expecting you'll ask us to dance, Mr. Rossiter."

"Dance!" cried Rossiter in bewilderment. Was the girl making game of him? Apparently not, for she seemed wholly in earnest.

"Certainly," she said in reply to his exclamation. "You dance, do you not?"

Rossiter was compelled to admit that he had danced.

"Then we shall feel very much slighted if you do not dance now, and if you neglect us," she added. "Won't we, Sylvia?"

"I am sure Mr. Rossiter is not accustomed to slight his friends," said Miss Densmore.

"But I haven't danced in a number of years, and——" began Rossiter.

He had heard the gayeties of the following night talked about among a number of the younger pickers,—Mamie Becraft was in a twitter over them,—but the gossip had meant nothing to him. He dance! It was absurd. Not that he lacked skill in the art. Once he had been considered most accomplished, a partner who was welcomed by all whom he sought, but that was in another existence. He was surprised that Miss Merton and her cousin proposed joining in the free-and-easy rollickings of the hop-dance, but evidently the two girls were bent on a lark, and Miriam was doubtless eager to show Miss Densmore all the phases of the hop-harvest.

"You haven't completed your sentence," said Miss Merton. "That 'and' does not mean because you haven't danced in some time you won't dance now, I hope."

The pole-puller glanced down at his clumsy shoes and at his attire.

"People don't wear their finery at hop-dances," said Miss Merton.

And yet Rossiter would not promise. Much as he knew the pleasure would be to him, this more intimate and friendly association with the two cousins, he had a feeling that their gratitude prompted them to urge him, and, moreover, he shrank from meeting, in his coarse garb, Miss Merton's Hintonville friends. The girls renewed their attack the next morning, but without avail.

"I'm too rusty," Rossiter plead as an excuse. "I should be treading on everyone's toes!"

It chanced that afternoon that Miss Merton had left the yard for a few moments, and Miss Densmore was picking alone. Rossiter was passing, and she called to him.

"My cousin is sadly put out," she said, "because you are so obstinate. She is very anxious, as you must have seen, to arrange a set

by ourselves. There are three men and two girls coming from Hintonville, and Jack (that's Mr. Parmelee, you know) can't dance all the time, for he's got everything to look after. Don't you realize how much you could help us out if you only would?"

This put the matter in quite a different light.

"I will do what I can," said Rossiter simply. "I didn't quite understand."

"Thank you," and her smile carried more real joy to him than anything he had experienced, it seemed to him, since he could recall.

Evening came, and all preparations for the gayeties had been made. The floor of the large hop-house had been cleared and the room lighted with lamps and lanterns. About the walls festoons of hops had been hung, a small platform erected for the musicians, and seats placed for the dancers when they were not on the floor. Before eight o'clock the music, two fiddlers and a celloist, arrived, and soon the pickers from two or three adjacent farms drove up in large hop-wagons. Then shortly Miss Merton's little party from Hintonville appeared, and by half-past eight the dancing was in full swing.

Rossiter did not join in the merriment at the outset, but stood in the background near the door watching, with not a little amusement, the antics of some of the rustics. Several men would occasionally launch into sort of a break-down, and the sound of their energetic efforts, usually in excellent time, would be heard above the combined shuffle of all other feet and the rise and dip of the music. Swains grasped the waists of their dulcineas, as they "swung partners," and whirled them with gay abandon. Though the attire of the men was commonplace in the extreme, that of the women was as extraordinary as it was varied. Bright colors predominated, and not a few of the combinations would have been likely to afflict an artist's eye with an acute optical disturbance.

The leader of the orchestra, if it be permissible thus to dignify the music, especially entertained Rossiter. His black hair and whiskers had evidently been elaborated for the occasion, and shone with a lustre which was unmistakably oily. He handled his bow with an exaggerated ease and called the changes with a delicious gusto. One particular change in the quadrille appeared to be a great favorite with him, and he always preluded it with a grand sweep across his violin strings. His voice gathered more than common animation, and he broke into something like a tune:

"First lady balance to the right-hand gent, with the right-hand round, the right-hand round, the right-hand round; balance to the next with the left-hand round; lady in the centre and seven hands round. A-la-main to your partners!" And with what a magnificent flourish came the close!

There were no waltzes or galops, but the lancers followed the Virginia reel, and the money-musk the quadrille. By and by, when there was a lull in the music, Jack Parmelee sought Rossiter, and presently the whilom vagabond found himself chatting to a pleasant-faced maiden who called Hintonville her home, and then, ere he realized it, he was upon the floor dancing. It came to him naturally, and when there was a general change to a bar of waltz music—they were engaged in a quadrille—and the others waltzed, he followed suit with his vis-a-vis, who chanced to be Miss Merton.

"You must let me thank you," she said. "And to think that you tried to make out that you were 'rusty'! Why, one would imagine you did nothing but 'trip the light fantastic'!"

"If it's true that men are deceivers ever," he returned, "women are certainly flatterers ever."

Once the ice was broken, Rossiter enjoyed himself thoroughly. Miss Merton's friends apparently ignored his rough garb, and after a little he himself in a large measure forgot it. Joe Becraft occasionally observed him with mingled admiration and wonder, and so the evening wore on.

Between eleven and midnight refreshments were served,—new cider and some of Mrs. Merton's unapproachable doughnuts. While the repast was in progress Rossiter managed to absent himself, though when the music struck up he was again on hand to be chidden by Miss Merton for running away. He had danced twice with Miss Densmore, and now ventured to ask her to favor him a third time. Money-musk had just been called.

"Will you not wait for a quadrille or the lancers?" she suggested. "I should like to rest a little longer. I'm not very strong, you know."

He lingered at her side for a moment, not seeming to be inclined to seek another partner.

"If you are not intending to dance," she said, "perhaps you will take me into the orchard. I should very much like a breath of air."

Just without under the trees rustic seats had been placed, and above, in the branches, Japanese lanterns hung. They found a seat that was unoccupied and sat watching the dancers through the open door. There was a singular unreality about the whole scene. The music, softened a little by distance, lost none of its blithesomeness, but took on a mellow charm that it had not within. The flitting figures, crossing the space visible through the door-way, were like a succession of pirouetting puppets. Out of the night came the clearly chorded cricket thrumming.

It was impossible not to be touched by the subtle combination of light and sound, and Rossiter let go of the tense hold he had kept upon himself. The girl beside him seemed like a rare exotic in whose presence he was permitted, by an inscrutable chance, to linger for a brief space.

Why should he not, he asked himself, enjoy the exquisite sense of beauty that her personality exhaled? Into what surge and plunge of life he might soon be carried it was idle to conjecture. At least he would bear with him one fragrant recollection, one drop of a precious attar to sweeten what might be a desert future.

IX.

IN THE ORCHARD.

"THIS is vastly more entertaining than any ball I ever attended, even my first," said Miss Densmore, after they had sat several moments in silence, Rossiter dreamily looking and listening, and she in a somewhat similar mood.

"I suppose," Rossiter replied, "that this is as much like a contra-dance as anything we have in this country. It's a pity that the men are so dreadfully unpicturesque."

"A contra-dance? Yes, I should say so. It is certainly quite as amusing. You have visited other countries, Mr. Rossiter?"

Before his previous remark such a thing as his having been a traveller would hardly have occurred to her.

"Yes, I crossed the ocean once. I was thinking just now—this scene brought it back to me, I expect—of a festa I witnessed one April day at Turn-Severin. Were you ever there?"

"No, I never was."

He then told her how he had, at one time, been ascending the Danube, had chanced upon a holiday gathering at the Roumanian river town, and had stopped off to witness it. He described the scene graphically, the peasants dancing on the sward, the fantastic music, the bright costumes of the women and their curious head-dresses, some of the maidens wearing strings of tinkling coins—their dowries—upon their plaited hair.

Miss Densmore was deeply interested.

"It must have been quite like something I once saw in Suabia," she said.

"Yes, very likely."

What a strange puzzle this man was, Miss Densmore could but think. Not only did he pique her curiosity, but something more,—she began to feel attracted towards him. For the first time in her life it had been brought home to her that clothes do not make the gentleman. Born and reared in an old and conservative society, she had had small opportunity to see, through personal contact, aught but the silks and velvets of existence. She had been often at the Merton farm, it is true, but never before to know anything of the real farm life, and elsewhere she moved only among those favored like herself.

She had been more or less intimately acquainted with many men;

had had many admirers, as a girl of her attractiveness was likely to have. Two or three men she had at different times fancied she loved, but the fancy had somehow been dispelled before any irretrievable step was taken. Though she had passed her twenty-fifth year and had seen much social life, she still kept before her mental vision some of those rainbow dreams of youth that, with many, vanish ere the age which she had attained is reached.

Rossiter was with her a decidedly new experience. Before the Sunday afternoon in the woods she had regarded him somewhat wonderingly as a man out of place. Once it had occurred to her that he might be masquerading, but she put this thought aside. Now, since she had come to know him better, she began to see that he had a history, that he was not simply one who had chanced to pick up this and that from books, and through his power of adaptability make cunning use of what he had read. No, he was to the manner born, a person of good breeding and of education; but why, with his pleasing address and his talents, was he occupying the position of a pole-puller in her uncle's hop-yard?—honest enough work, but not just what a man of Rossiter's tastes and acquirements would seek by choice.

Her few moments' conversation with him since coming into the open air revealed him in still another light, and only caused her the greater marvel. He had shown her more of his real self, minus the radical weaknesses of his character, than he had betrayed to anyone since he had quitted the world of his birth. To the natural attraction aroused by the element of mystery encompassing him was added the deep sense of gratitude which Miss Densmore felt towards him, despite the fact that he had so strenuously repelled any expression of it on her part. Her dreadful experience at the spring by the wood was to her like an evil dream, through which Rossiter passed in the guise of a knight subduing the ravening dragon. Though he had only acted as any man of ordinary feeling and courage would have done under similar circumstances, she could but invest him with a certain halo of heroism. This, however, was in no wise patent in her demeanor towards him, and her cousin had several times upbraided her because she did not show in a greater degree an appreciation of Rossiter's services. Perhaps for more than anything else she admired and respected him for his attitude towards herself and her cousin. Never once, that she could recall, had he presumed upon his position to advance his acquaintance with them, although it was perfectly evident that he found pleasure in their society and conversation. Herein, more than in aught else, she told herself, he revealed his innate gentlemanliness.

The talk between Miss Densmore and Rossiter having touched upon foreign lands, it naturally turned upon places that were in common familiar. He spoke with freedom and ease upon remote scenes and

customs, of the delights and the discomforts of travel, but it was largely in an impersonal way. Whenever she tried to draw him out in regard to himself, which occasionally she made an effort to do, she met with but little response.

"How different," she said at length, "the life of the traveller is, the experiences one passes through, from the life one takes up on returning home! I was at first sorely discontented after my delightful year of wandering and study to come back to so much that is humdrum and trivial. And you, Mr. Rossiter; I can hardly connect the happy pilgrim which you evidently were with the——" She hesitated for the word with which to complete her sentence, for she did not wish to give him offence.

"With the pole-puller!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, with the pole-puller, since you put it so," she said.

"Why try to connect them?" he asked. "I have felt all the time I have been talking with you as though in comparing reminiscences with you mine were those of another person."

"I have heard it advanced as a theory that all people pass through several existences in living one, but I have always regarded that notion as a vagary of the visionary."

"It is a theory to which I can heartily subscribe."

"Well, I am inclined to think my hop-picking experience may convert me to your view. I suppose one garners something from these various stages, each with its new set of experiences."

"If it were only the good that one gathered, the agreeable that one recalled!"

"Isn't that a matter of the will, at least in part? I'm sure I do not mean to carry away from my hop-picking existence aught but its happy phases."

Rossiter, looking at her in the flickering and dying lantern-light, for the boughs obscured the moonbeams, and catching the outline of her delicate profile, the poise of her head, and the witchery of that straying lock of hair, told himself that among his gleanings from the hop-fields there would certainly be one golden memory.

The music ceased suddenly, evidently in the midst of a measure. There seemed to be a commotion within. Then Jack Parmelee appeared at the door, followed by three or four men.

"You go that way, some of you," he said, pointing towards the upper corner of the kiln; "I'll take the lower side."

He was off as he spoke, while two of those who had accompanied him were quick to do his bidding. A third followed hard after Parmelee.

"I can't imagine what has happened," said Rossiter, "but I think it might be well to go in."

Miss Densmore clung rather nervously to his arm as they walked to the door of the kiln. Within they found the dancers gathered in groups, and Rossiter led Miss Densmore towards those with whom Miss Merton was standing. She was glancing about her anxiously.

"Ah, here you are!" she exclaimed, when she caught sight of her cousin. There was a decided note of relief in her tone.

"What was it?" asked Rossiter.

"Oh, a horrid creature stuck his head in at the window over there and frightened some of us," replied Miriam, glancing a little apprehensively at her cousin.

Miss Densmore's cheeks grew all at once unwontedly pale.

"I'm thankful I was not here," she said, with a little, forced laugh.

Rossiter excused himself and hastened to the door. Without, half a dozen of the more curious men had collected. As Rossiter joined them there rose the sound of a struggle below the kiln, and they heard Jack Parmelee's voice, loud and stern. All moved hastily in the direction from which it proceeded. As they gained the corner they made out three men approaching, followed closely by two others. One of those in advance was Parmelee. He was gripping the man next him by the shoulder and wrist, while this individual was held in similar fashion by the one walking upon the other side. An intuition had told Rossiter that the cause of the commotion was "Whiskers," and his intuition was correct. The captive whom Parmelee and his companion were marching between them was none other than Hart Dawson, and more like a wild animal he looked than a human being.

The group of which Rossiter was a member parted, allowing the two men and their prisoner to pass.

"You will come snoopin' around scarin' honest folk, will you, you hairy ape!" Parmelee was saying. "The place for you, and all like you, is the 'jug,' and an all-fired pity it is we can't spare the time to take you there. But I've a little medicine that'll teach you not to show your ugly 'mug' here again. Hey, Dick Whittlesey! where's that ox-goad?"

"I'll git it," said the man addressed, one of the farm-hands close at Parmelee's heels.

Captors and captive, and the attendant onlookers, among whom was Rossiter, were nearing the roadway gate when Whittlesey returned from his errand.

"Give me the goad, and take hold here for a minute," said Parmelee. Whittlesey did as commanded.

"Now we'll move on," Parmelee continued.

Presently the four were standing in the middle of the road, while the spectators paused in the gate-way. Parmelee got a firm grip on Dawson's coat-collar at the back of his neck.

"When I give the word, you men let go," he cried.

They made ready to spring back.

"Now!" he exclaimed, and the next instant the whistling goad wound around the legs of the struggling tramp. In vain did he strive to turn and close with Mr. Merton's overseer. He was in the grip of one more than his equal in strength, who had over him a distinct advantage. Again and again the goad descended, and then at length Parmelee released his hold. "Whiskers" wheeled as though he would leap upon his chastiser, but the merciless goad cut him stingingly across the cheek, and he ran howling and cursing into the night.

X.

PASSING DAYS.

ROSSITER had his third dance with Miss Densmore, but he saw that it was an effort for her to go through the changes. Indeed, the spirits of the whole company had fallen many degrees. Miss Merton's friends declared that they must be going home, and with their departure the two girls retired to the house. Rossiter lingered a few moments in the kiln after they had left and then sought his cot. He could not sleep, however, and as the music still continued his thoughts drifted with it up and down the gamut of the night's happenings. He wondered if Miss Densmore would be able to carry out her determination to keep from the store of her hop-picking experiences naught but the pleasant for her treasure-trove of memory. He feared this was little likely, though he realized that she was a girl of strong will. In such matters, however, the mind cannot be coerced. Then he began to query what part, if any, he played in that which she would retain and cherish. He was now past calling himself a fool for dwelling upon her. He had suddenly assumed a different attitude in this regard. He would indulge in the luxury of playing the moth. There was a fine exaltation in being singed at so bright a flame, and if no one save himself was aware of the singeing, what did it matter?

Late in the night a soft rain began falling, and its monotone lulled Rossiter to sleep. Everything was dripping in the morning, and no one turned out early, for picking was impossible. By three o'clock, however, a portion of one yard which stood upon high ground was sufficiently dry under foot, so work was here resumed. All the land near the house devoted to hops had by this time been cleared, and the pickers were obliged to walk a considerable distance from the farm buildings before reaching the scene of their efforts.

Rossiter caught but a glimpse or two of Miss Densmore on the day following the dance, as she and Miss Merton did not go into the fields. He had a bright nod from her as he was hurrying by the house on an errand for Parmelee, and again in the evening spoke an instant with

her and with Miss Merton upon the porch. On Saturday, however, both girls were once more picking. In fact, they were out earlier than common.

"See how ambitious we are getting!" exclaimed Miss Merton, as Rossiter wished them good-morning.

"Positively grasping!" cried Miss Densmore. "We counted up our tickets last night, and calculated how much money we were likely to have at the end. I've spent mine in my mind a dozen times already," and she gave one of her infectious little laughs.

That day was one of delight to Rossiter. Both of the girls were as blithe as birds, and he caught something of their gayety. Only once was there any reference to the occurrence which had in a measure marred the pleasure of the hop-dance.

Miss Merton had walked across to chat a moment with Mrs. Becraft, to whom she had taken a fancy, and whom she recalled from the preceding year, and Rossiter chanced to be stripping a pole near the box of the two girls.

"I wanted to ask you a question," said Miss Densmore, when she saw he had finished. "Miriam is not inclined to talk about it for fear, I suppose, of disturbing me. But wasn't that man the other night the same one who——"

"Yes," interrupted Rossiter, not waiting for her to complete the sentence. There seemed to be no other way but to be perfectly frank with her. "But he'll not come 'snoopin'' round again, as Mr. Parmelee says."

"I heard what Jack did. I wonder if it was the wisest course to take? Anyhow, I should be afraid to turn such a creature loose after it."

The same thought had occurred to Rossiter, but he did not acknowledge it. "Whiskers's" bitter vindictiveness he did not doubt. Fear of being caught was the only thing that would deter him from attempting some sort of revenge. Indeed, that had already occurred, had Rossiter but known it, which went far towards disproving his assertion in regard to Dawson's reappearance.

As the pole-puller and Joe Becraft were walking towards the sleeping-quarters of the men that night they fancied they detected a figure in the shadow of a tree near the lower rear corner of the hop-kiln.

"We'd better see who that is," said Rossiter; "there may be some mischief going on here."

As they advanced, the figure emerged from the gloom and came to meet them.

"It's me," said Parmelee's jolly voice, "just havin' a look round. Come into the kiln a minute." Thus bidden, they went along with him.

"You go out back there," Parmelee said to a farm-hand whom they found within, "and keep your eyes open."

The pungent smell of the drying hops permeated the air. Parmelee opened the door which led down into the floorless space where the huge stove stood to see that the draughts were right and the fire hot. Sulphur fumes from two pans upon the stove-top were rising thickly, and a little blue streamer floated out into the baling-room of the kiln. Parmelee slammed the door and turned towards Rossiter and Becraft.

"I was lyin' here last night, on the bunk yonder," said he, with a jerk of his thumb, "'long about two o'clock. I'd just got a fresh kiln on, an' the fire all fixed, an' had told Dick Whittlesey to watch it, an' was thinkin' that mebbe I'd have a little snooze, when I happened to glance over to the window there—the same one where that hairy devil poked his head in t'other night—an' I swear there was a pair of eyes borin' into me. They were gone quicker than a pole-cat, but I can tell you it didn't take me long to get out there after 'em. There wasn't a sign of anybody, however, but as I stood peerin' into the dark I thought I heard a queer sort o' cracklin', an' then there was a little gleam of light behind the kiln."

"Fire?" cried Rossiter.

"Fire! yes, siree," said Parmelee. "Well, I let out a yell for Dick Whittlesey, and he came boundin' to the door, scart as a rabbit. 'Water!' I shouted to him. 'Bring that bucket!' We always keep a bucket handy, you know, in case anythin' should happen inside. He was pretty quick, I s'pose, but it seemed just all eternity to me. However, when he did come we weren't many seconds gettin' round to the other side, and there was as pretty a little blaze as you'd care to see just beginnin' to eat into the boards of the kiln. If we'd been five minutes later, you wouldn't be standin' where you are now."

"By Jove," exclaimed Rossiter, "that's a mighty serious matter! You think——"

"Think!" broke in Parmelee; "you don't have to think long to spot the pair o' hands that tried that trick. It's that devilish ape I thrashed the other night, though there's nothin' to prove it. Very considerate, I call it, of those Waterbury people to fix up that stockade, or whatever it is, for hoboes over there, and bring all the offscourings in creation into this part of the country."

"Is that what they've done?" asked Rossiter.

"Yes," said Parmelee. "They 'jug' a tramp if he's found in town, but outside the corporation they've got this place, where all the vagrants under God's heaven can sleep an' feed. We're reapin' the benefit of their little scheme."

"I don't believe this fellow'll try it on again here," said Becraft, as he and Rossiter turned to go.

"Guess you're right," answered Parmelee. "Of course, he saw that we nipped his fine little flame in the bud, and knows we're pretty sure

to be on the lookout. If you should go over to Waterbury to-morrow, like as not you'd find him there with some of his handsome pals as innocent as you please."

As Rossiter and Becraft sallied forth on their excursion to Blue Creek on the following morning, Sunday, they encountered Jack Parmelee and Mr. Merton in earnest talk at the gate-way.

"Goin' for a tramp?" Parmelee asked, as the two passed.

"Yes," answered Rossiter, "over to Blue Creek."

"It's quite a place," said Parmelee. "I'll tell you what you might do," he continued, "if you care to walk as far."

"What's that?"

"Well, if you follow the creek down for three-quarters of a mile, mebbe, you'll come to a little branch that leads up through a side gully. Strike into that for a score of rods, cross the Blue Creek Road, which makes a big dip just there, and after you've gone, oh, say twice as far again, take a bee-line through the woods and you'll hit our loggin'-road that'll fetch you out at the meadow below the orchard."

"Much obliged," said Rossiter.

"And say," added Parmelee, "you might just have your eyes open and watch out for any traces of that hairy hobo."

"We'll do it!" and the two swung off in the direction of the gulf.

It was one of those vital September mornings. The artist Frost had begun work upon his autumn picture, giving little touches here and there which later he would amplify until the whole country-side from horizon to horizon would show the result of his glowing skill.

"You're not sorry you came hop-pickin', are you?" demanded Becraft, as the two stopped for a moment at the spot where Rossiter had encountered "Whiskers."

The valley of the Blue Creek was at their feet, peaceful and beautiful in the September sunlight.

"Sorry!" exclaimed Rossiter; "very far from it. And I've you to thank for it all. I feel that I'm a different man from the vagabond you met that day in Illica."

"There's no doubt o' that. Nobody'd take you for the same chap. But as for thanks, I don't want to hear anythin' about that sort o' thing. You don't suppose I've forgotten what you did for me, do you?"

"Well, we'll call it quits, and say no more about it. But why did you let on to your mother in regard to that business in the river? She made it mighty uncomfortable for me the other day."

Becraft grinned.

"Did she?" said he. "She always thought you was just about right, but, by jinks, now you're the whole thing, an' no mistake!"

"What does she think about a certain son of hers? Eh, Joe?"

Becraft tried to look unconcerned, but his effort proved a flat failure,

and so, in the best of humor, they descended into the valley. Along the bank of the singing, crystal stream they wandered, now through open pastures, now beneath the shade of great forest trees, and now through a dense undergrowth of beech and maple. On both sides rose lofty wooded banks, sometimes one hundred yards or more from the bed of the stream, sometimes close at hand, so that they could see, in moist clefts far above their heads, great sprays of maiden-hair and beds of the rare walking-fern. They surprised speckled trout in dark pools, hollowed by the action of the water upon the blue slate which gave the stream its name; and they encountered curious fungus-growths, strange even to Rossiter, who had picked up considerable wood-lore in his way-farings. By and by they noted the branch glen, of which Parmelee had spoken, and turned into it. It was contracted and thickly wooded before they emerged upon the Blue Creek Road, a highway which ran for some distance parallel to the stream and then bent away towards the Merton farm, but above the road it expanded, and in places the forest was less dense.

The road crossed the ravine by an embankment, and yet there was a sharp dip, so deep was the depression.

"Golly!" said Becraft, gazing about, "if this ain't a wild place!"

"It certainly is," responded Rossiter. "We might be miles from a house, and yet I presume there are farms quite near."

They did not pause to see, however, but continued on their way up the glen.

"I think we'd better climb the bank and strike into the woods here," announced Rossiter, as they reached a spot where the ravine widened and its bottom was dotted with dense clumps of scrub hemlock.

They were making for the thicket-covered slope, when, on passing between two close-set hemlock clumps, they discovered the still smouldering ashes of a fire. Charred potato skins and cobs from which the corn had been eaten were strewn upon the ground.

"We're too late for breakfast," said Rossiter, looking about as if in search of further traces of those who had kindled the fire. "It might be interesting to know who feasted here. More than one evidently, judging the workmen by their chips, or if but one he'd been indulging in a pretty long fast."

There was nothing further to be discovered, so they ascended the bank and entered the forest. After a time, as Parmelee had predicted, they encountered the logging-road, and were back at the farm before the dinner-hour. That afternoon they reported the finding of the remains of the fire to Mr. Merton's manager.

"Of course, there's no tellin' who it might have been," Parmelee said. "We'll keep watch anyhow. That blamed monkey may still be hangin' about after all."

XI.

THE DIP IN THE BLUE CREEK ROAD.

HOP-PICKING at the Merton farm was drawing to a close. It was Wednesday afternoon, and by mid-afternoon of the day following Jack Parmelee calculated that the last pole would be stripped.

During these final days of the harvest Miss Densmore had contrived to learn much of the story of Rossiter's life, not directly, but by inference, and by patching together such facts in regard to him as he had let fall intentionally or by accident. She had managed to break in upon his reserve, and had often been upon the point of asking him certain questions regarding himself, yet had never done so. Of Rossiter's admiration for her she was aware, perhaps in a measure by intuition, for he had scrupulously endeavored not to let his feelings be manifest, and she doubted if even her cousin had observed anything in his demeanor to indicate that he had a preference between them. Her state of mind towards him she had not seriously tried to analyze. Of a lively interest in him she was conscious, but had any one suggested that she cherished a deeper or a warmer feeling she would have repelled the idea vehemently. The discovery of weaknesses in his character had not lowered him in her estimation. Indeed, her sympathies, for that very reason, went out towards him more strongly. She fancied she discerned the battle he was fighting with himself, and longed somehow, if he would but let her, to give him encouragement and help.

On Wednesday morning the girls had been at their box as usual, but they did not come into the yard to pick in the afternoon. About three o'clock, as Rossiter was stripping a pole in that portion of the field nearest the house, he caught sight of Miss Merton hastening towards him.

"Where is Jack—Mr. Parmelee?" she called, much perturbed, as soon as she came within speaking distance.

Rossiter looked about but could see nothing of the farm manager. Finally, however, he descried him engaged in emptying a box of hops in a remote part of the field.

"There he is," he said, "way out yonder."

"Oh, won't you go and fetch him? I'm all out of breath. And hurry, do, for what I have to tell him may be very important."

Rossiter set out at a sharp run, and presently he and Parmelee came back together. The pole-puller was then about to retire when Miss Merton stopped him.

"Won't you listen too, Mr. Rossiter," she said, "for if there's any trouble perhaps you can help us?"

He acquiesced, and the two men stood regarding the girl in expectation and wonder.

"First tell me," said she, addressing Parmelee, "if Simpson is in the yard, for if he is, perhaps I've had my fright for nothing."

"Simpson!" exclaimed Parmelee; "no, he's not. I've been lookin' for him this long time. I sent him over to the kiln on an errand more than half an hour ago."

"Then I'm afraid there's something wrong," said Miss Merton, growing more agitated, "and, oh, I wish I'd come sooner! I happened to go out on the porch awhile ago," she went on, speaking rapidly, "and saw a man running far down in the lower orchard. He stopped under a tree, and then I noticed there were two other men there. I thought they were some of the pickers after apples,—you know they're in the habit of getting them,—and didn't pay much more attention, but when I got back in the house it came to me that the first man seemed like Simpson, and that one of the others, though, of course, I couldn't really see much at such a distance, had a face like that creature who frightened us at the hop-dance. I went out to look again and they were gone, so I came to the conclusion that they must have leaped the fence and taken a short cut back to the yard, but when I got to thinking about it later I couldn't help feeling that it was strange, so I hurried over to tell you."

Parmelee pursed his lips and seemed incredulous.

"If it wa'n't for Simpson's absence," said he, "I should set all this down as foolishness, Miriam."

"Wasn't Simpson by when father started for Hintonville?" she asked, "and didn't he hear father speak about going to the bank for money to pay the pickers, and say he meant to return by the Blue Creek Road because he wanted to speak with Ezra Merriman a minute?"

"He was there, by the Eternal!" cried Parmelee, "for he brought the horse out."

"And you know Simpson owes father a grudge for having him discharged last spring. Father said he never would have let you take him back if help hadn't been so scarce," continued Miss Merton, growing more animated.

"If there's anythin' wrong," said Parmelee, now awakening to the possible seriousness of the situation, "we're losin' valuable time. You'll come?" he asked, turning to Rossiter. "I'd rather have you along than anyone else I know."

"I'm at your service," said Rossiter.

"You find Dick Whittlesey, Miriam, and tell him to hitch on to the light wagon with the yellow gear, and drive towards Merriman's by the Blue Creek Road as fast as he can. We'll go across lots. If anythin's goin' to happen it'll be at the dip."

Parmelee had suddenly thought of the remains of the fire which Rossiter and Becraft had seen near this depression in the road.

"You know Sylvia went with father," said Miss Merton as she hurried away.

"By thunder, so she did!" cried Parmelee.

Rossiter's face grew very grave at this news.

"You haven't a revolver, have you?" he asked.

"No; I wish to heaven I had!" exclaimed the farm manager. "There's a shot-gun at the kiln, but it's so heavy it'd be more hindrance than use."

Parmelee paused long enough at the barn to catch up the ox-goad, then he led the way down through the orchard. The dog-trot pace he set hardly satisfied the impatient Rossiter, but he ventured no comment, realizing that Parmelee was the better judge of time and distance. The latter was inclined to drink at the spring, but his companion restrained him, telling him water was a poor stay for what they might have in hand. Swerving from the logging-road at the glade, they struck off almost at right angles. Progress was slower now, yet they did not relax into a walk until they approached a fence beyond which the bank of the branch of the Blue Creek glen pitched abruptly. Up to this time they had exchanged but few words.

"I've been thinkin' it out," said Parmelee, leaning for a breathing-space against the top fence-rail, "an' I guess we'd better part here, so that you can hit the dip on one side and I on the other. If you follow this fence you'll come out in a pasture about three hundred yards from the road; then if they're in sight you can shout, and wave to 'em to stop. I'll cross the glen here, and that'll land me the other side of the dip. In case everythin's not all right, it may advantage us more to have you appearin' from one way an' me from the other. You'll have a little farther to go, but I take it you're a good bit speedier than I am. How does the plan strike you?"

"As excellent," answered Rossiter.

"All right, then," said Parmelee, "we're off!" and he put his foot upon the lower rail.

Here and there, as Rossiter sped on, the sunlight lay in little golden splashes upon moss and bracken, but mostly his track lay through soft, cool, green shade. The ground was high and dry, and, though the trees were set thickly, there was scarcely any undergrowth to impede his progress. His blood sang in his veins, and he was keyed to the heights of action. He leaped across hollows, sprang over fallen logs, and vaulted cross-fences with the light-heartedness of one hastening to a tryst. His thought did not include Mr. Merton, nor did it take into account the possibility of harm befalling the one whom he was speeding to guard. Neither did he harbor any dream in his mind that to him aught could accrue from any aid he might give to the girl whose gracious loveliness had grown to be

so much to him. He was filled with the pure joy of serving. That alone impelled him.

At length the forest grew thinner, and he saw before him the open field and beyond it the Blue Creek Road. As he emerged from the trees he discovered that a short distance from the dip the highway took a sharp turn, so that in reality he had but a few rods of it in view. He had traversed perhaps half of the stretch of pasture when he descried a horse and buggy rounding the bend. Was it Mr. Merton and his niece? An instant, and he knew that it was, and Mr. Merton was driving rapidly. Rossiter set up a shout and began waving his cap, but evidently the noise of the wheels drowned his cries, and against the dark background of trees skirting the glen his figure was not seen, for the occupants of the carriage did not appear to be looking towards him, and there was no diminution in the speed of the horse. He redoubled his shouts, and yet without effect. Then it occurred to him that his proximity to the fence and foliage might be the cause of his not being noticed, and he ran obliquely into the field, swinging his arms. Just as the horse reached the crest of the dip he fancied Miss Densmore observed him, but he was not sure, for a moment later the buggy disappeared.

He did not slacken speed, but raced on over the springy turf, his ear alert to catch the first sounds of a struggle. A confusion of shouts came to him as he drew near the fence separating the pasture from the road. He put his hands upon the top rail and went over with a bound. Almost before his feet touched ground he was conscious of what was going on in the dip below him. Mr. Merton's horse was rearing and plunging in the grasp of one man, while Mr. Merton was lashing savagely with his whip at two others who were attacking him from opposite sides of the buggy. Of Miss Densmore Rossiter could see nothing, but he surmised, and rightly, that she was crouching half upon the seat and half upon the bottom of the vehicle to give her uncle freer play with his whip.

With an Indian-like yell Rossiter dashed down into the dip. Already one of the men—"Whiskers"—had Mr. Merton in his grasp. He seemed not to heed the shout, but the other, Simpson, turned his head, and seeing who it was stepped back a pace. "Whiskers's" attention was thus attracted, and he too recognizing Rossiter ripped out a terrible oath.

"Tackle him, tackle him, you dummy! I'll tend to the ole gent," he added.

He had not relaxed his ferocious grip on Mr. Merton, and Rossiter saw that Miriam's father was in imminent danger of being dragged from the carriage. His whip had slipped to the ground, and the reins would have fallen beneath the heels of the horse had not Miss Densmore

opportunistically seized them. Rossiter eluded Simpson's clumsy attempt to grasp him, and sprang to Mr. Merton's aid, thus forcing "Whiskers" for an instant to release his hold. If he could keep them at bay until Parmelee arrived all would be well. He danced out of reach along the edge of the embankment after he had fetched "Whiskers" a stinging buffet, Simpson close after him.

"Parmelee! Parmelee!" he shouted.

There was a faint cry in answer. "Whiskers" renewed his attack upon Mr. Merton, but Simpson stopped short, and the man who was gripping the horse's head glanced about in apprehension.

"The game's up, 'Whiskers,'" said Simpson, "we'd better make tracks!"

"Not if hell splits!" cried the furious tramp, and he caught from the roadside a bludgeon which he had evidently dropped in order the better to use his hands, and menaced the now defenceless Mr. Merton.

"That bag o' money, or I'll brain ye!" he shouted.

Rossiter made a rush at Simpson. The man was powerful but awkward, while Rossiter had never lost the agility of his college days. There was no grappling, though the farm-hand made a clutch at his antagonist, a second afterwards to reel blindly backward under a fierce blow that landed upon his jaw. Then Rossiter was past him. The bludgeon was poised in "Whiskers's" hand, and Mr. Merton was fumbling in his pocket, when Parmelee's shout from the crest of the dip caused the tramp to turn. He knew that their dastardly attempt had failed. Even at that instant his confederate released the struggling horse, and the frightened animal plunged forward. "Whiskers's" eyes were murderous. Rossiter had seen the same look in them before in the wood. The young man's impetuous leap past Simpson to Mr. Merton's assistance had brought him and the enraged vagabond face to face. The long run and the violent efforts he had since made seemed suddenly to tell upon his strength. He felt his breath weaken. He was aware of the swinging bludgeon and of trying to dodge the blow, and then it was as though the earth had gaped and swallowed him.

He returned to a consciousness of existence through a variety of painful sensations, most of them in his head.

He opened his eyes.

"Are they gone?" he asked weakly.

"Yes," someone said.

He knew the voice, and gained suddenly a clearer realization of his surroundings. Parmelee, Mr. Merton, and Dick Whittlesey were standing about him, while over him Miss Densmore was bending with a look concerning which he many, many times afterwards questioned himself, wondering if he had seen it in a dream.

XII.

AN ARRIVAL.

In the light wagon, propped up between Jack Parmelee and Dick Whittlesey, Rossiter rode back to the Merton farm. At first everything was a daze to him, but soon the air revived him somewhat, and before the house was reached, save for a giddiness and a dull throbbing in his head, he fancied he was quite himself. He was glad of the aid of Parmelee's stout arm, however, when he came to descend to the ground.

"I'll be all right after a bit," he said, as he steadied himself, "if you'll help me down to my cot."

Mr. Merton and Miss Densmore had hastened on in advance, and they, with Miss Merton and her mother, gathered about the injured man.

"You're to come right in here," Mrs. Merton declared, and, though Rossiter protested, he was led into the family living-room, where, stretched upon a couch, he was made as comfortable as might be with cool compresses that after a time allayed the painful feeling in his head. The blow from the bludgeon had been a glancing one, but above his ear a lump had formed that was exceedingly tender to the touch.

By and by Jack Parmelee looked in from an outer door, and, noting the improvement in Rossiter's appearance, exclaimed:

"That was a pretty ugly little clip you got! It keeled you half way down the embankment, an' if it had been a couple o' inches the other way your head an' a squashed puff-ball'd have passed for twins."

"How can you, Jack?" cried Miss Merton, who, with her mother, chanced to be in the room.

"What's the use o' gloomin' about it? He'll be fit enough in the mornin'. A trifle sore in the upper story mebbe, but that won't last long."

"You were just in time," said Rossiter, smiling. "I was about done for."

"You put up a great fight, Sylvia says, and Merton allows you've got the darndest grit he ever saw. They'd all skeedaddled by the time I got down into the dip. They must have thought I had an army behind me by the way they lit out. Well, Dick Whittlesey *was* close by, and he's a whole regiment in a scrap."

Rossiter had a brief nap late in the afternoon, and woke to find himself alone and much refreshed. The rattling of dishes indicated the nearness of the supper-hour, and outside there was a suggestion of approaching dusk. He rose to his feet without difficulty, and was walking towards the outer door, which opened upon the porch, with no definite intention, when Miss Densmore appeared from the adjoining room bearing a daintily arranged tray, upon which was a steaming cup of tea, some toast, and a few other tempting edibles.

She exclaimed in protest on seeing Rossiter.

"You're to sit down at once, sir!" she said. "We're not going to have you running off in that fashion."

He succumbed very willingly, and she bustled about making him comfortable.

"Miriam and my aunt are busy," she exclaimed, "so I said I'd look after you."

"You needn't have been to all this trouble," he answered. "I'm fully recovered now." But he was glad to eat with her sitting by chatting cheerily to him.

"I'm afraid," he remarked presently, "that you will find it difficult to keep to yourself your promise of the other night."

"What was that?"

"Don't you recall? You were going to hold in recollection from your hop-picking life only its pleasant phases. Aren't the disagreeables, to speak, likely far to outweigh the happy experiences?"

"Oh, no!" she replied, with a little shake of the head. "It's like a play. Unless the end is tragic, however much the actors pass through, the effect is not darksome, quite the contrary. The bright scenes stand out and the gloomy ones recede."

"The end!" thought Rossiter. Yes, the end of this small episode in life's drama was certainly near at hand. It was delicate ground these two were treading upon;—the girl more and more conscious of something in her heart which she would not admit to herself was there, fearful of all it might involve, her sensitive nature shrinking from the speech of family, of friends, and of the world; the man now wholly mastered by the love he had so sternly struggled against, realizing its apparent folly and hopelessness, and yet grasping at straws, and buoyed up by the frailer fabric of dreams.

"Though you would not let me try to tell you, Mr. Rossiter," Miss Densmore broke out suddenly, "of my gratitude to you for all you did for me, I must, I will speak of your nobleness, your generosity, your bravery in coming to uncle's aid. Why, if it hadn't been for you——"

Her words were as spark to powder. All the pent-up emotion within him rushed to his lips. She should know, whatever might be the consequences, that it was her presence with Mr. Merton that had moved him to strive so mightily, that there was nothing he would not do, aye, to risking life and limb a thousand times, to win her favor. Whatever his past might have been, and she should read the open page of it without reserve, the future, and she might put him to the proof, should be like the life-moulding of another man, if he might but wear her gage.

"Do you think, Miss Densmore," he began, and there was that in

his voice and in his eyes that caused her to turn away, "do you think I would have gone so eagerly to your uncle's aid——"

His impassioned words were cut short by Miss Merton's entrance.

"How cosey you are!" she cried, seating herself. "And is the hero quite recovered?"

"He's likely to faint dead away if you apply that title to him again, Miss Merton," Rossiter had wit enough to answer.

What had he been about to say? Miss Densmore wondered. Inference clearly pointed but in one direction, and yet——. She was in a tremor of doubt, not sure of herself, marvelling at Rossiter's sudden exhibition of feeling when hitherto he had held himself in such close restraint. As for Rossiter, he resolved that he would not turn his back on the Merton farm and the hop-fields without putting his fortune once more to the test.

Mr. and Mrs. Merton came in shortly, a lamp was lighted, and then, though they urged upon him to rest for a while longer, Rossiter declared that he would go down to the men's sleeping-quarters, and bade them all "good-night."

"You'll not hesitate to rouse some of us if you should feel ill?" said Mrs. Merton.

Rossiter assured her that she need have no further anxiety in regard to him, and went out to find Joe Becraft lounging about watching for him. He would have much preferred to be alone, but he would not hurt Becraft's feelings, so the two walked towards the men's sleeping-quarters together.

The next morning Rossiter was at his work as usual. He did not feel strong, but in response to all inquiries replied that he needed only another night's rest to be ready for further adventures. The girls came into the yard long enough to pick one more box each, chatted gleefully over the amount of money they had earned, talked of the departure of the pickers and how lonely the farm would seem after they had gone, inquired as to Rossiter's plans, and said, as they were leaving, that they would reserve their good-byes until later, he having stated that he should probably ride into Illica with the Becrafts on the following morning, although some were planning to take the evening train from Hintonville.

By four o'clock the last box had been emptied, the last pole stripped and stacked. It was announced that Mr. Merton was to be found in his little room in the barn, and thither all the pickers flocked for their pay. When the grateful farmer came to settle with Rossiter he endeavored to make him accept a much larger sum than that due him, saying he wished in some way to show his appreciation of his many services, and knew no other manner of making clear such appreciation. It was frankly yet by no means indelicately put, and though the pole-puller

would not listen to the proposal, he was gratified rather than offended. Mr. Merton then asked him if he would not like to remain in his employment upon the farm, saying that Jack Parmelee had suggested it. For this further mark of kindness Rossiter expressed his thanks, but replied in the negative, whereat Mr. Merton's regret was apparently genuine.

As Rossiter emerged from his interview with Mr. Merton, and was standing in the door of the barn pondering upon how he should effect his interview with Miss Densmore, a young man, trimly clad and neatly gloved, drove briskly into the yard in a smart dog-cart. He pulled up in front of the porch, and Miss Densmore and Miss Merton came out to meet him.

"Hullo! There's young Wolfe, a friend of Sylvia's from Illica," said Jack Parmelee, who was sitting upon the barn threshold whittling energetically at a splinter of pine. "Hey, Dick Whittlesey! Run and take that horse!"

"I came down from the woods day before yesterday," the newcomer was saying to Miss Densmore, "and yesterday I met your father, who told me you were up here, so I thought I'd drive out."

As Rossiter viewed the greeting between the two, the lovely girl and this fine-looking, handsomely dressed young man, the little fabric of dream which he had allowed to grow gradually since his struggle in the dip crumbled into dismal ruin. He strode away into the orchard cursing himself for his mad presumption. Yet hope died hard, and by the time the sound of the supper-bell rang out he made up his mind that the presence of this unexpected arrival should not deter him from pleading his cause. Curiously, in all his thoughts of Miss Densmore the probability that her affections were engaged was not a thing that had received from him much consideration. Now he wondered why.

The evening meal was earlier than usual, that those of the pickers who desired might catch the train at Hintonville. After he had eaten Rossiter again sought the orchard. He had decided that he would wait and watch to see when Mr. Wolfe took his departure, and then perhaps the opportunity he sought would offer itself. Eagerly he marked the shadows gather, and saw the evening star begin to glisten beyond the purple outline of the distant hills. He was just upon the point of returning to the proximity of the house when he caught the faint murmur of voices. He had found a seat upon a wide rail in a corner of the snake fence where tall elderberry bushes formed a partial screen, and fancying it was some of the pickers wandering by the path, half a dozen yards away, to the edge of the orchard, he concluded he would let them pass before making a move. He sat there inattentive and passive until suddenly he was conscious that one of those speaking was Miss Densmore. Without looking he knew who her companion must be. What

should he do? As yet he had heard no word of their conversation, and he had no desire to play the unwilling eavesdropper. As noiselessly as possible he tried to shift his position so that he might slip into the bushes on the other side of the fence and thus steal away unnoticed. He had half accomplished his purpose when what Wolffe was saying became clear to him.

"It isn't a matter of one hour in the day, Sylvia, but of every hour," his words ran. "Indeed, it seems to me that you are never absent from my thoughts. I can't put you away from me. Why, up there in the woods I heard your name in the song of every bird, in every breeze that cried in the pine-tops, in every brook murmuring over the rocks. Your face was always before me, even when I woke in the great darkness of the forest night."

Rossiter could not know that it was the third time this young man had declared his love to Miss Densmore; that he was now breaking his promise not to speak of it to her again; that a moment before, when he had ventured on forbidden ground, she had endeavored to silence him. To the tortured man it seemed like a first declaration, and to all appearances the girl was a willing listener. In his agony of mind his caution was forgotten, and he allowed one of the branches which he had bent back to slip from his hand and strike against the fence. Miss Densmore glanced towards him, recognized his disappearing figure, and gave a little, suppressed cry. He supposed it to be one of fright, and, hastily parting the bushes among which he now found himself, sped, crushed at heart, swiftly away into the thickening shades.

XIII.

GOOD-BY TO THE HOP-FIELDS.

WHEN Miss Densmore stepped upon the porch of the house she was alone. Mr. Wolffe had gone to the barn to look after the harnessing of his horse. His interview had had in it an unmistakable element of finality, and at last he realized the utter hopelessness of further pleadings and protestations. He could not understand Miss Densmore's strange agitation and fright at the noise in the bushes, but why, he questioned, should he now trouble his head about that? His horse was shortly ready, he sprang into the cart, gathered up the reins, and started, in no very amiable mood, on his twelve-mile drive to Illica.

As Miss Densmore entered a narrow side hall-way she encountered Jack Parmelee.

"Your pole-puller left his good-byes," he said. "He changed his mind, I guess, about waitin' until morning; thought mebbe he could catch the train at Hintonville; wanted me to give you this," and he held out a small slip of folded note-paper.

"Thank you," said Miss Densmore, taking it and passing into the

room where Rossiter had been brought the previous afternoon, and where her cousin and aunt were now sitting. It was, then, even as she had feared: Rossiter had heard a portion of Mr. Wolffe's untimely declaration.

"Mr. Wolffe wished me to say good-night," she remarked to Miriam and her aunt. "It's so late that he felt he must hasten back."

"Mr. Rossiter's gone. Did Jack tell you?" exclaimed Miriam. "Wasn't it queer he should start off so, and never come in to say good-by? I can't understand it. Really, I feel quite hurt."

"Oh, I suppose he thought if he waited to say good-by to everyone he wouldn't catch the train," returned Miss Densmore with assumed indifference.

This attitude on her cousin's part seemed so unnatural that Miss Merton fell to wondering what could be back of it, but she did not think it wise to question her. There was Mr. Wolffe's sudden departure too. Could there be any connection between the abrupt leave-taking of the two men? The enigma was quite beyond her solving, and there appeared to be no inclination on Miss Densmore's part to solve it for her. The latter lingered for a moment, and then passed leisurely from the room. She ascended the stairs, entered her chamber, and closed the door. She did not strike a light at once, but sat down upon the edge of the bed and gazed wide-eyed at the wall.

She recalled what she had said on the night of the hop-dance, and also her talk with Rossiter on the preceding evening. "Her promise to herself," he had called it, her assertion in regard to her after-thought of her hop-picking life. Tears started into her eyes. Had he come to say good-by to her, as she surely expected that he would, she had meant to extend to him a cordial invitation to call upon her in Illica, and something in her heart told her he would have come. Now she felt that in all likelihood she should never see him again. He had not revealed to her his home—or the place that he had once called home; she had gathered that it was one of the large eastern cities, and that he was returning thither to begin life anew, that was all. The chapter seemed to her irrevocably closed.

At length she rose, lighted a candle, and unfolded the crumpled scrap of paper. "Good-by. God bless you," she read, and then his signature—"Philip Rossiter." She extinguished the candle, and going to the window looked long at the sky and the fast-thickening stars. Then she walked to the bureau, opened one of the drawers, and taking therefrom a little box of Venetian glass which held some treasured trinkets, snapped back the lid and laid the paper caressingly among them.

After his plunge out of the bushes Rossiter hurried up the field, crossed into the upper orchard, and made his way to the sleeping-quar-

ters of the men. What he had just seen and heard had suddenly dissolved the resolution and purpose that had daily been taking firmer and more definite shape since he left the freight-train that night at Illica. Life never would, never could, hold aught for him. What he had recently experienced proved this but too plainly. He was a fool to think that now he could ever be anything but a vagabond. He would take to the road again. Hastily he put his few belongings together and strode to the door. There he paused. Should he leave without a word to any one? The love in his heart flooded over him like a great wave as his mind reverted to Miss Densmore. No, he would somehow contrive to send a good-by to her. It was a crowning piece of folly, doubtless, for it would mean nothing to her, but he would indulge in it nevertheless. It would be his final tribute on the now shattered altar of hope,—the shrine which he had so unwittingly reared.

He remembered to have seen Joe Becraft that morning slip a small pencil into a vest hanging upon a chair near his cot. The garment was still there, and Rossiter soon found the pencil. He took out his brother's letter, tore off at the crease a little strip upon which there was no writing, and in the dim light traced his words of adieu. He then replaced the pencil, thrust the folded message into his pocket, and rending in scraps the remainder of the letter, scattered the fragments upon the grass as he stepped from the door.

"There's an end of that!" he said.

In the hop-kiln, by dull lantern light, some of the pickers were having a last impromptu merry-making to the wheezy music of a mouth-organ played by one of their number. Among the dancers was Joe Becraft. It had been Rossiter's intention to bid him good-by, but he saw that he could not do so without encountering many others, so with a consciousness of real regret he turned away. As he came to the end of the barn he descried Jack Parmelee's familiar figure moving towards the house. Here was the very man for his purpose. He hailed him.

"Mr. Parmelee!" he called.

The farm manager halted.

"Oh, it's you!" he said, as Rossiter drew near. "What's up?" He had remarked the pole-puller's bundle.

"I'm off," said Rossiter. "I've changed my mind about waiting till morning. If I hurry I think I can catch the Hintonville train, but I can't wait to say good-by to everyone. Won't you make my adieus to Mr. and Mrs. Merton and Miss Merton and to the Becrafts,—I'm very sorry not to see them all,—and would you be kind enough to give this to Miss Densmore?"

He held out the slip of paper with its pencilled words. Parmelee took it.

"Why, certainly, to be sure," he said. "But you'd better wait.

Indeed, I wish you'd stay right on. We need just such a man as you. Mr. Merton'd give you good wages, you know."

"It's very kind of you. Mr. Merton spoke about it, but I must go," answered Rossiter, holding out his hand.

"Well, you'll come next year?" said Parmelee, giving him a hearty grip. "I'll keep a place for you, if you say so."

"I can't promise," Rossiter replied. "Thanks just the same."

Parmelee watched Rossiter stride out of the gate and take the Hintonville road.

"There's a chap I can't make out," he muttered as he walked towards the house.

Rossiter recalled that half way to Hintonville there was a highway branching towards the west. When he reached this he took it without hesitation. He had no intention of trying to catch the train, but had spoken of doing so as a plausible excuse for his hasty departure. Plans he had none, needed none. He was to drift again, a waif, a vagrant, a common vagabond. Now nothing mattered. Money he had, more than he had possessed that year, but of what special avail was it? In the life to which he was returning he could manage quite as easily without it. He trudged on steadily, his mind a babel of emotions. One by one he reviewed the scenes of his hop-yard life, in which Miss Densmore always appeared as the central figure, but chiefly he dwelt upon his return to consciousness after the encounter in the dip of the Blue Creek Road. It must have been pity and not love that he had seen in Miss Densmore's eyes as she had bent above him. Yes, it must have been that, and yet the look haunted him, and continued to do so.

By and by he found himself nearing the valley of the Oskenton. As he halted an instant before seeking the lower level, a fierce pulsating flame leaped up into the hollow of the night, and he knew that he was not far from the blast furnace of Harkana. Descending, he chose a road that led him past the flaring stacks, and paused to watch the fiery waves of molten iron pour into the moulds of sand. He crossed the furnace slag-heaps, hideous even in the starlight, and beyond the Oskenton and the abandoned Susquehanna Canal found a highway ascending into the hills. Whither it wound he had no notion, and naught did he care. The hills appealed to him. He would go up among them as high as might be, and so he struck into this road. For a time it ascended gradually, then it became stony and steep. Behind him, from time to time, the stacks of the furnace shot streamers of red and blue and orange into the night, illumining briefly and weirdly the heaven and the earth. Occasionally a cloud would reflect the glow after the flame had died, a mock sunrise or sunset. Towards midnight, when he had won high among the uplands, the moon rose, a crumbling segment of pale gold.

Rossiter was now weary, and presently a straw-stack in a field adjoining the highway suggested a desirable place of rest. He scaled the fence and approached the stack, becoming conscious, as he did so, of the sound of heavy breathing. Someone, it was evident, had already availed himself of a free night's lodging. Rossiter hesitated an instant and then went forward. Doubtless there would be plenty of accommodation for two. On the eastern side of the stack, revealed distinctly by the moonlight, was the huddled body of a man. There could be no harm, Rossiter thought, in having a closer glance at his fellow-lodger. He advanced cautiously a few paces and peered down, to start back in amazement and dismay, for he had gazed upon the repulsive face of "Whiskers."

Swiftly and silently he retraced his steps to the road, his mind swept by a powerful reaction. Voluntarily he had returned to the level of this detestable creature, had allowed the first disappointment to overthrow every firm resolve of the past weeks, and had gone miserably down once more into the very slough of degeneracy. Out of the realization of his instability, the overwhelming sense of his bitter shame, by some strange and sudden revulsion his spirit rose triumphant. He bowed his head.

"With God's help," he said, "it is the last time!"

He strode downward towards the valley, and a mile from the straw-stack found a sleeping-place in a shed. Slumber soon brought its boon of forgetfulness, but before it did so he summoned from the depths of his recollection the lovely contour of Miss Densmore's face.

"After all," he thought, musing upon the sweetness of what might have been, "it is a blessing to have known her!"

When he roused the following morning the sun had scattered the banked mists above the hills beyond the Merton farm, and as he stood in the door-way of his rude shelter, blinking in the glistening light, a farmer approached driving market-ward with a heaped wagon-load of potatoes. The two men exchanged glances and nods.

"Bound for Hintonville?" inquired Rossiter.

"Yep. That's where I'm goin'," was the reply.

"Perhaps you wouldn't mind giving me a lift, then?"

"Mind? Certainly not! Jump right up."

He checked his horses until Rossiter had mounted to the seat beside him. He was of a hearty, big-souled type; had a sandy beard, keen yet kindly blue eyes, and a voice that expanded into a muffled roar at the close of every sentence. His laugh too was explosive.

"Been hop-pickin', I s'pose, an' now startin' home?" he ventured.

"Yes," returned Rossiter.

"Like it?"

"Yes, very much."

"Hain't heard, hev ye, what happened to a hop-picker, er a tramp, las' night up to Bob Pankhurst's on the hill?"

"No; what was it?"

"Well, ye see Bob's got—er had, ruther—a straw-stack jest across the road from his house that'd ketch the eye o' anybody strollin' by an' in want o' a place to stow 'emselves till daylight free o' charge. They's plenty o' sech about these days,"—this final remark with a sly glance at his companion.

The mention of the straw-stack had stimulated Rossiter's interest to such a degree that he did not heed the attempted pleasantry.

"Yes! yes!" he cried. "What happened?"

"Well," said the farmer, "when Bob got up this mornin' he was minus a straw-stack. The blamed thing burnt in the night, and not a dern soul about the place seen it. When they discovered it, and come to go near to look at it, there was a man's boots sticken' out o' the black, smokin' mass. His upper part was done to a crisp."

"If I recall rightly," said Rossiter, conscious of a sudden awe in his tone which the other did not seem to notice, "there is but one straw-stack for some distance."

"Yep," said the farmer, "that's right! Bob's is the only one fer at least three miles, leas'twise the only one near the road. The feller, whoever he was, must 'ave been smokin' an' fallen asleep. He's had his las' smoke, that's dead sure, an' a mighty big one it was, by the look o' it."

Rossiter had no comment to make. The horror of the scene kindled in his imagination by the farmer's words silenced him. And yet he could but consider the dreadful doom which had overtaken "Whiskers" as retributive. There was no one, he thought, who would question the justice of this tragic interposition of fate, but the shocking end of Hart Dawson was still heavy on his mind when, an hour later, he stepped upon the platform of the Hintonville station.

XIV.

COMMENCEMENT AT MONROE COLLEGE.

It was the evening of Commencement Day at Monroe College. Upon the wide veranda of one of the fraternity houses sat Philip Rossiter smoking a cigar and gazing through an opening in the trees at the moonlight-flooded valley. A very different man he was in thought and appearance from the individual who had strolled about the college campus that Sabbath morning more than a year and a half previous. The sky of fortune began to clear for him the day he became a member of the staff of the *Evening Star*, and there had been no recurrence of cloud. Early in his career upon the paper, in the absence of a more experienced reporter, he had interviewed a distinguished personage with

unwonted tact, and thus leaped at a bound into the graces of the editor-in-chief. Inspired by his success, he tried sketch writing, the line of effort in which he had formerly won praise. His vivid pictures of the slums, of tramp life, of unusual police-court episodes, quickly attracted attention. From these sketches to fiction was a natural and easy transition, and he suddenly found himself a contributor to one of the best magazines.

Rossiter was again the neatly dressed man of yore, and to the ease of manner which had always been his was added a subtle trace of independence, of assurance, that was wholly new to him. He bore in his heart but one burden, his love for Sylvia Densmore; and yet he often confessed to himself that the memory of her winsome personality carried with it more of sweetness than of sadness. Her image and the recollection of the hop-field days, more than the importuning of friends, had drawn him back to Hintonville and the reunion with his college classmates.

It was his first holiday since he had begun work upon the *Evening Star*, and it proved to him a time of restful delight,—delight within whose translucent amber he was conscious of but a single flaw. Three of the four days for which he had been granted leave of absence had slipped by. Should he on the morrow drive over to the Merton farm and have a chat with the good people,—Jack Parmelee and Mr. and Mrs. Merton and their daughter? Every night since his arrival in Hintonville he had put to himself this question, but the visit was yet to be made. Passionately as he longed for some news of Miss Densmore, he dreaded to hear of what he reflected must, in all probability, have long since taken place,—her marriage.

For nearly an hour carriages had been passing, conveying students and young ladies and their chaperones to the gymnasium, where the senior ball was that night to be held. Rossiter's special friends were making calls in town, and within the fraternity house the under-classmen were entertaining several prospective freshmen. Rossiter was hence left quite to himself, yet he was in no wise lonely, his thoughts being very agreeable company. Presently strains of music floated down to him across the campus. For a while he listened to them dreamily, then it occurred to him that it might be interesting to see what an up-to-date college ball was like, so he rose and sauntered towards the gymnasium.

As he emerged from the maple shadow, he found the combination of music and moonlight so beguiling that he was in no hurry to venture farther, so he seated himself upon the steps of the chapel, which adjoined the gymnasium, directly beneath the symmetrical finger of the spire.

To the north he could mark the spasmodic twinkling of the electric

towers of Illica, and there, in the vague purple distance to the south-east, lay the Merton farm.

His face was set in this direction when an unusually lively air from the orchestra stirred him from his reverie. With something like a sigh he turned towards the gymnasium, and was soon climbing to the third floor. As he wheeled about to survey the room, on reaching the top stair, a gay spectacle met his eye. Great streamers of old gold and blue—the college colors—were festooned from beam to beam above the whirling dancers, and at intervals flags and trophies captured at inter-collegiate meets were suspended. There was a general flutter of gauzy fabrics and a blending of talk and laughter that ever and anon surged above a dip in the music.

Among the patronesses, sitting not far from where he stood, Rossiter espied the wife of one of the professors, a lady who had formerly shown him many kindnesses, and he crossed to speak with her. He then found a seat about half way down the room in one of the deep windows. Could anything be more blithesome, more full of debonair life, he thought, than the scene before him? They were draining the clearest wine of the cup of youth, these gay dancers!

For an instant the floor at his right was nearly clear, and as his eyes traversed this space they fell upon a woman of middle age and a young lady sitting upon an improvised divan on the opposite side of the room. He started as though touched by an electric current. Was it—could it be? Did his vision not deceive him? He sprang up, but at that instant two dancers swept between him and the face on which he had suddenly become strenuously intent.

The dancers passed. Yes, he was not mistaken. It was the girl he had known as Sylvia Densmore. His heart gave a great throb. One of the ball committee was hastening by, a student whom Rossiter had spoken with that day at the fraternity house. Rossiter seized him by the arm.

"Can you tell me," said he, "who that girl is yonder?" indicating the place with a nod. "The one upon the divan."

The student leaned forward so that he could see between the spinning couples.

"That's Miss Densmore, of Illica," he answered. "Would you like to be introduced to her? She's——" He stopped, amazed. Rossiter had caught only his first words, and was already making his way around the edge of the gyrating throng.

She was Miss Densmore still! A new hope sang in his brain, and his heart began dancing in rhythm to the violins. He was perhaps twenty feet distant when Miss Densmore realized that someone was approaching and glanced towards him, casually at first, then with a quick, amazed intentness. He saw the color (she had more than for-

merly) recede from her cheeks and then flood back again. She rose a little unsteadily.

"Is it—is it possible?" she exclaimed. "Mr. Rossiter!"

"Yes," he answered, beaming upon her as he clasped the hand which she extended.

She surveyed at a glance his trimly clad figure.

"Then you deceived us, after all," she said, with a shade of reproach in her tone. "You were masquerading!"

"No! no!" cried Rossiter. "If you will permit me, I will——"

Miss Densmore seemed suddenly to recollect herself, and presented Rossiter to the lady with whom she had been chatting,—her mother. With Mrs. Densmore (a refined, low-spoken woman) Rossiter exchanged a few polite words, and then, at the daughter's suggestion, seated himself by the side of the latter upon the divan. He could but realize that the girl was agitated, and as for himself, his wits seemed all at once to have flown to the four corners of earth.

"Monroe was my college," he after a little heard himself saying; "that's how it happens that I'm here. There was a class reunion, you know. I'm not in array, as you see, but it's so long since I've been at a college ball that I couldn't resist when I heard the music. I didn't dream of meeting you."

"I haven't attended the college parties for a year or two," Miss Densmore replied, "and it's quite by chance that I'm here to-night. Mamma and I drove out with a cousin of mine from Buffaland who is engaged to Mr. Wolfe, an old Illica friend."

Wolfe! That was the name of Miss Densmore's visitor the last night at the Mertons'. It was burned deeply into Rossiter's memory. But how strangely mistaken he had been! An intoxicating elation seized him, and then the music ceased. He glanced eagerly at Miss Densmore's card, which she was nervously fingering, and noted that all save one of the remaining dances were taken. She caught his look, and there was something assuring in her smile.

"May I have that?" he said, pointing to the unengaged dance.

"Yes," she replied softly, still smiling, and then an exuberant senior rushed up and bore her away.

Rossiter's eyes followed her with a gleam of rapture. For a brief space lights, music, whirling figures were as naught to him. He saw only the delicate contour of her face; heard only the low cadence of her voice. With a violent effort he shook off this waking spell and turned towards Mrs. Densmore, but someone had engaged her in conversation and he was free. He slipped into a vacant window-seat and watched for Miss Densmore's reappearance. Presently she floated by (or so it seemed to him), and after that only for an occasional instant did he lose sight of her.

So pleasurable was his occupation that he was not inclined to rail at time as a laggard. Could he not possess his soul in patience for a few moments when so short a period before he had thought to wait at the gate of the court of love, a poor, starving mendicant, for a lifetime? Doubt never assailed his heart; what he should say never entered his mind. He did not try to reason out this or that, to analyze his joy. He felt a wonderful thrill go through him, and realized that at last he had risen to a complete mastery of himself. Love, working through one of the sweetest of womankind, had wrought the miracle.

The music was silent when Miss Densmore placed her hand upon Rossiter's arm, but there were several couples promenading, with whom they fell into line. As they passed an open window a gentle breeze touched their faces and lifted ever so lightly the lace about Miss Densmore's throat. She glanced out into the night, and Rossiter's gaze followed hers.

"How like the evening of the hop-dance!" she exclaimed,—*"the moonlight and the whispering of the leaves! Do you remember?"*

"Remember!" echoed Rossiter; "indeed I do. There are some seats upon the campus," he continued; "shall we not go out for a little, as we did then?"

"Yes, if you wish it," she said.

In an ash cluster, a few yards across the sward and directly opposite the entrance to the gymnasium, they discovered an unoccupied bench reaching from tree to tree.

Rossiter did not hesitate, did not now hang back, did not trifle with his fate. He had done with indecision forever.

"I wonder if you ever dreamed," he began, as they seated themselves, "that your cousin once interrupted me when I was on the point of telling you the story of my life—and something else?"

Miss Densmore did not reply.

"I would like to tell you the story now," continued Rossiter,—*"that is, if I may, and then——"*

"But suppose I know," interrupted Miss Densmore, "since you have assured me you were not masquerading when I met you? Suppose I have guessed it?"

With her fine sensitiveness, she thought to save him from what might be a humiliating confession. He was not, however, in a mood to spare himself.

"Not all!" he cried. "Why, I was an outcast, a common vagabond!"

"Never quite that!" she remonstrated. "But whatever you were, you are your better self again. You have conquered."

"Conquered!" he repeated fervently; "yes, thanks to you, my love, to you! Can you," he went on, his voice growing husky with emotion, "will you help me to be the conqueror still?"

"I will," she answered simply, and there was an infinite trust and tenderness in her tone.

Their hands met and their lips. Within, the music burst into a jubilant air; above, there was a rhythmical rustle among the leaves as the breeze swept them aside and let the moonlight crown the final scene in Rossiter's regeneration.



PARIS

BY GUY WETMORE CARRYL

I KNEW when first I looked into her eyes
And she in mine, that what has been must be!
And so let others say she told them lies:

She told no lie to me.

She spoke me fair, of lees as well as wine,
Then, with that subtlest charm of all her charms,
Half-dropped her languid lids, and, at the sign,
I ran into her arms!

Now, it is she who flings my window wide
At dawn, and lets the perfumed morning in,
And she who walks so softly at my side
Through noonday's dust and din.

But, most of all, 'tis she, when blue night falls,
Whose firm imperious fingers tap the pane,
And she whose velvet voice it is that calls,
Nor calls her own in vain!

It is as if the siren understood
How that she is so strong at that still hour,
That I could not repulse her if I would,
Nor would, had I the power:
As if she knew that should I try to check
The strength of that enrapt responsive thrill,
Let her but slide her arms about my neck,
And I obey her will!

So, when she speaks, I answer, when she woos,
Her voice, like wine, the slow pulse goads and spurs.
I go to meet her through the dropping dews,
And lean my lips to hers.
All the long hours run laughing into one,
This strange sweet moment when the evening falls,
And, like a mother summoning her son,
The Sovereign City calls!

WINWOOD'S LUCK

By Mrs. Burton Harrison

Author of "A Triple Entanglement," "The Carcellini Emerald," etc.



A BEAUTIFUL young woman and a slender, high-bred lad—whom she resembled as a delicate copy in pastels resembles a strong portrait in oils—were, with an aged, white-haired negro, at work by the light of lanterns in a cellar of an old Virginian home.

It was past midnight, and the task they had set themselves was nearly accomplished. The man and the stripling were digging, with picks and shovels, two rude pits.

To this unaccustomed labor the youth brought fiery determination, the negro patient fidelity. In all his pampered life old Bushrod had never been called upon for manual exercise of such exaction. His most laborious duty in the household had been to polish the mahogany dining-table, to make the silver and glass outshine any other in the county, to dragoon and train generations of understrappers who were now in service in alien families.

As the sweat bedewed the tonsure on his ancient head and poured down his chocolate-colored face, the young lady again and again besought him to let her take his place.

The expression of wounded sensibility in his meek eyes protested against the thought that his beloved "Miss Ma'y," otherwise Mrs. Hugh Sandys, should believe he would permit her to so exert herself.

"I've done!" cried the lad, climbing up from his finished excavation. "Now, Molly, your turn's come. Let Unc' Bushrod help me to haul one of the chests into this hole, and you can be handing me down the things to pack."

Before Molly began the part so assigned her in the enterprise, she looked cautiously into the shadows and up at the slanting double doors closed at the top of a rough stairway leading into the still-room yard without. The cellar had been little used, except for piles of lumber and old barrels and boxes that now filled its recesses, and the rafters were fringed with a venerable drapery of cobwebs. At this hour, by the glimmering light, with two new-made graves yawning at her feet, it was an eerie place. But she did not blench or quiver.

"You are quite sure, Uncle Bushrod," she queried, "that Judy has no idea there are only books in those two boxes you took this morning over to the court-house in the cart?"

"Miss Ma'y," answered the old chap with dignity, "I done had three wives; an' Judy's de las', I reckon. An' I jes' tell you dis, honey, I don' trus' no colored 'ooman's tongue."

Molly smiled as she stooped to drag the ragged coverings from something hidden beneath the cellar steps.

"Well, I hope she's sleeping the better for not sharing our secrets. Oh Bertie, what is that?"

A very feminine little scream brought her brother to the rescue. A moving creature had touched her pretty foot in its morocco slipper, with the lacing of narrow black ribbon crossed over a fine white stocking.

"What a goose you are, sister! It's one of our land-turtles—Ned's and mine—that we carved our initials on and turned loose in here. Look!" he went on, capturing and holding to the light the reptile, that drew head and wriggling feet into its horny case of mottled brown and yellow. "Here's Ned's 'E. W.,' you see; and old Ned's been off with the army a whole year, while I've been tied at Winwood. I know I had to stay here, at first, because my father ordered me not to go; and I know that lately I have had to take care of you. But when mother was called away to nurse my father in Richmond, she had no idea we'd be having these alarms about raids in the neighborhood. Even my father thinks I should go and volunteer now, and mother ought to be back soon—though I don't like your stopping on here a single day after me; and I wish you'd pack up that new baby and come away with me to-morrow."

"And lose my chance of showing Hugh his daughter?" exclaimed Molly Sandys. "No, Bertie! Now that I know my husband's command is so near that he may get off to see me any day, I don't stir from here till I have my orders from head-quarters. I'll stay at Winwood so long as Uncle Bushrod and Judy stand by me."

To Bushrod this appeal was an accolade. He held his head up and looked valiant; and then, at thought of the scattered household and the changed prospects of the family, choked and sniffed to hide his feelings.

"To work! To work!" cried his young mistress, her eyes too filling with sudden tears.

Until break of day they toiled. Two chests, lowered into the pits prepared, were filled with valuables. In the bottom of one of these were laid, first, Mrs. Winwood's jewels: a spray, ear-rings, and necklace of magnificent old rose diamonds, also a string of costly pearls, with a number of rings, bracelets, watches, and brooches—all heirlooms in the family. Sentimentally considered, the gem of the collection was a sort of amulet, an aqua-marina stone, set in a marvel of Milanese goldsmith's work, and inscribed with the legend, "Winwood's Luck." This

had drifted down from some English forbear, who had neglected to send with it on the stream of time an explanation of its history. But the Virginian Winwoods held on to it religiously, and Molly had the fancy to press it to her lips as she handed it to be laid with the rest. Over the cases containing all the smaller relics she had slipped bags of chamois skin, and above them was now spread a layer of antique parchments and papers, letters, indentures, and other yellow documents, including a pompous pedigree, its earliest part engrossed in Elizabethan days, with later additions. These had been taken by lapfuls from the escritoire in the library, where they had long gathered dust. And, lastly, filling both chests, were stowed away old Bushrod's pride, the silver plate whose lustre had known no hand but his.

Candelabra, urns, tea and coffee sets, jugs, beakers, loving-cups, and salvers, dishes, and the smaller articles of the table—the full array of the famous Winwood silver that had first crossed the sea when the acres of Winwood Manor were primeval forest, granted to the immigrant ancestor by the British crown, then represented by a colonial governor.

Bushrod, who had seen with equanimity both jewels and papers thus encoffined, groaned aloud when these darlings of his familiar companionship were consigned to their strange resting-place, some curtains of faded yellow brocade serving them as winding-sheets.

"I feel mos' lak I did when I was buryin' Mandy—or Tilly; I disremember which 'ooman it was I tuk so hard," he observed reminiscently.

Then the chests—iron-banded, oak-ribbed, of an ancient English make—were padlocked, the keys received by Mrs. Sandys and thrust into her bosom. The old butler, aching in back and loins, stretched himself preparatory to filling in the pits. Bertie, with a woful yawn, wished he were well a-bed. Molly wondered if the nurse would hear the baby if it cried. Then all set to again with a will. Even Molly did her share with a broken fire-shovel found in a corner; and at cock-crow all was finished.

As much of the earth as could be filled in above the chests and rammed down to level the graves with the floor elsewhere was re-covered with a heterogeneous mass of discarded household stuff they had removed from the spot of entombment. The remainder was carefully put into sacks to be carried out at night and emptied in the garden. The cellar was in other respects restored to its former condition and appearance, and left to the tenancy of Ned's land-turtle. Then wearily the three crept up the stairs—Bushrod first, the upper half of him, emerging into open air to see if the coast were clear, resembling a jack-in-the-box much the worse for usage.

Through the forest that closed in around the old timber-and-plaster house, swathed in ivy to the eaves, wandered a fresh, sweet breeze of

dawn, bringing with it to the ear the sound of birds stirring upon branches and the murmur of awakening nature everywhere. Over in the eastern sky, above a cluster of black farm-buildings surrounded by an orchard, a rosy pink was putting out the stars. And from an open window somewhere above her head Molly Sandys heard a low, cooing note that filled her tired face with rapture.

"My good baby! She has slept till now!" she whispered, hastening her steps; then paused.

"I'm not going to thank you, Uncle Bushrod," she said gravely. "You are one of us, you know. But I want to charge you and Bertie to keep what we have just done a secret from everybody in the world but my father and mother and my brother Ned. I have acted according to my best judgment in burying these things instead of sending them in to the court-house for safe-keeping, as I had at first proposed. My husband's warning that a raid is likely to occur there made me afraid to risk it. You both agreed with me, you know, that this is the better plan."

"Indeed I did, Molly," replied Bertie; "and I think you've done splendidly. I shall relieve *my* mind by telling mother or father or Ned, whichever I meet first inside the Confederate lines, but no one else, I swear."

"I won't swar, Miss Ma'y," said the old negro, taking off his straw hat and standing before her in proud humility; "but you can trus' me to be faithful to de Winwood fambly long as dere's breff in my body. And I reckon you and Marse Bertie know'd it when you sot me onto dis job."

"Then lie there, old chests," added Molly, with a wave of her white hand, "till happier days, when the war is over and we ask you to give us back our Luck."

The days went by. At last Molly Sandys was to be rewarded for her long, solitary vigil in the old, deserted house. The first note she had received from Hugh since their separation had come to Winwood by the hand of a gaunt countryman driving a load of market stuff in a rude cart drawn by a rusty mule. When she had read the bit of paper torn from a cavalryman's note-book, upon which were inscribed a few words in French, she had forthwith begun to cry; then, seizing his horny hand in hers, she led the messenger within doors and gave him the best food and drink her buffet could afford.

For this was none less than a scout from Captain Sandys's famous troop of horsemen, who had harried the Union pickets and raiding parties in that vicinity till the news of their daring had gone far and wide, and a great oath had been sworn by valiant fighters to be even with Sandys or die in the attempt. Molly knew by repute John Dodd,

the tall man with the little piping voice, who was her husband's eyes and ears and strong right hand in his feats of guerilla warfare. Before Dodd left she had managed to give him a peep at the baby's nose, with a pink fist beside it, emerging from a flannel cowl, "so he might tell the Captain." And Dodd, in return for this privilege, had informed her that the Captain hoped before long to get off to see her and his daughter; adding that, in view of the unsettled state of the country thereabouts, it would be well to strip Winwood of valuables—burying them for preference, since at any moment even the county court-house might be rifled and set on fire.

This event came duly to pass three days after Bertie's departure into the Confederate lines; and Molly thought with glee of her foresight in hiding away the precious belongings, now supposed by the neighbors to be ashes or melted beneath the ruins of the court-house.

Day by day, night after night, she waited for further news of Captain Hugh. At last, one July morning, a woman in a sunbonnet, carrying a tin pail, came trudging up the lane and presented herself at the still-room door, where Molly was instructing two lazy black girls in the household arts.

"I thought mebbe you'd be wanting extra dewberries for jam, Mrs. Sandys," said the visitor.

Molly, looking down the funnel of the sunbonnet, saw in the speaker's eyes something to make her thrill with joy and fear in turn.

"Hush! Don't let on!" added the woman in a lower tone. "I'm Jane Dodd, aunt to John Dodd that they caught inside a Yankee camp and hanged last Friday. I got word from your husband to tell you he'd be here sometime to-night after twelve and before sun-up. The scouting parties are all about looking for him and his men, ma'am."

"Ah, poor, poor Dodd! Thank God my husband's coming!" exclaimed Molly incoherently; then said, with a smile like summer lightning, "But what a bad time to see the color of her eyes!"

"I allers told John he'd trip up an' fall at the last," said Mrs. Dodd, nursing her own emotion.

"Poor Dodd!" repeated Molly, now dissolving into tears.

After midnight. Inside the threshold of the door she sat praying and palpitating; stealing out, when she thought old Bushrod was not looking, into the porch, that was a nest of fragrant honeysuckle, to strain her ears for the sound of Hugh's horse's feet. Excepting the negro, who patrolled around the house, no one was stirring. Presently, far off upon the pine-needles of the wood-road, she heard the muffled tread of horses. Then the sound died away. Bushrod too heard it, and scratched his head in wonder as to what it meant. He made up his mind not to tell "Miss Ma'y," lest she should be disappointed.

As if anything could deceive "Miss Ma'y!"

She was outdoors already, lifting her arms to heaven in thankfulness, her heart beating as if it would burst against the two keys of the buried chests, which she had not parted with. The woods all about them were in deepest shadow. So tall the trees, so dense the foliage, she saw of the sky above her but a circle of blue-black, painted with twinkling stars.

Not another sound. Molly's mercury went down; she uttered a gasp of disappointment.

Then it began again; there was not a ghost of a chance of mistaking this for anything but the long, steady stride of swift horses coming at a gallop. They drew nearer; they turned in at the avenue leading to the house-gate; they pulled up—an officer and his orderly—in front of the fence that, in Virginian fashion, surrounded the dwelling-house, sprang to the ground—and Molly was in her husband's arms!

"My own true, brave wife," Hugh whispered in her ear. Reckless dare-devil though he was to the rest of the world (no match, the county and her parents thought, for their belle and darling), to Molly he had always been gentle as a lamb. In her, so the gossips said, the Black Captain had met his master.

Before he had released her from his long embrace, old Bushrod emerged from the shadows, and said in an anxious tone:

"Howdy, Marse Hugh! Mighty glad to see you safe, sir." Then, lowering his voice, he advised that the orderly be directed to take the horses to the back part of the premises, in the shadow of a clump of locust-trees, where they would be sheltered from observation from the front.

"Have your own way, old man. Show Wood where to lead them, and get him a drink and a morsel of supper. We've not got long to stop here, Molly darling, thanks to a raiding party that crossed our track and rode on to Matteawan Turnpike—delaying us a good hour."

"Oh, never mind! You are here—you are going to see her! Tell me truly, Hugh, did you think of anything but our precious angel as you came?"

The Black Captain hesitated. In the rapture of this reunion he had forgotten that he owned a daughter.

But his wife led him proudly within doors to that bower of peace, her own white-curtained room, where roses looked in at the open window, and the shaded light of a night-lamp fell on a small waxen object cradled beside Molly's couch.

"Isn't she exquisite?" asked the young mother eagerly, as she turned the cover from her baby.

"Er—if you say so, yes. But, in plain fact, Molly, I'm starving,

and a cup of water from the old well would be nectar to my parched throat. After I've drunk and eaten, no matter what, I'll be as praiseful of her as even you could ask."

But he knelt down, one long leg with the dusty boot and spur trailing away off into the room, and pressed a kiss upon the sleeping cherub's hand. The first touch of her warm, yielding, helpless flesh sent through him a timorous, tender thrill. His child—Molly's and his!

As old Bushrod was assisting the tired and hungry orderly to lead the horses to the grassy enclosure in the rear of the house, he cocked his head to one side and listened. Then he slipped back to his old coign of vantage by the gate and listened again. Next he flew—such time his old legs had not made in many a month of moons—back into the house, up to "Miss Ma'y's" chamber-door, and cried:

"Captain! for Gawd's sake, come, sir! They is soldiers hid in the woods both sides in front. Get on your horse and jump the fence behin', Marse Hugh. You know the farm-road that'll take you safe."

One kiss, one despairing clasp. Hugh fled; and Molly, seizing her baby from its crib, ran after him. But quick as Hugh Sandys was, old Bushrod had got first to the spot where the horses were, their bridles in the hand of the trooper, who stood, half dazed with sleep, leaning against a tree.

Bushrod's wits were nimble and his loyalty immense. He thought he had fallen upon a plan to divert from "Miss Ma'y's" Captain the attention of his ambushed foes. Quickly as he could, he clambered into the orderly's saddle and started the horse at a gallop over Molly's flowerbeds, around at the side of the house, and out at the front gate into the double darkness of the shaded avenue.

Shot after shot rang out into the night. One of them struck old Bushrod and sent him toppling over, dead, into a clump of flowers-deluce on the roadside; and another, coming from an ambuscade stationed at the rear of the dwelling, hit the famous Black Captain just as his charger rose with him to a grand jump over the fence, beyond which he had thought lay safety.

It was dawn when the attacking party assembled around the prostrate corpse of their valiant and dreaded foe.

Their leader, a handsome, fair young officer, bade his men lift it gently and bear it into the house. One of the negro women, wakened and terrified by the shooting, had run out and told the victors what was going on within.

Poor Molly lay insensible upon the couch to which her maids had carried her; the baby slept in old Judy's arms.

The Captain's orderly also had informed his captors, when they took him prisoner, of the circumstances of the case. The Union officer, into whose cap was going the feather of having rid their army of the

most fearless, resourceful, and unrelenting tormentor of their outposts, caught one glimpse of the scene in the hall of the old house and rued the day and hour he was born.

While he stood there bare-headed, all the manly and generous sentiments of his nature aroused by the woe and terror he had caused, a couple of soldiers came up, bearing the body of old Bushrod.

Judy, catching sight of it, laid the baby in an arm-chair and dashed out, screaming, to enfold her husband's bloody form.

"He died tryin' to save Marse Hugh Sandys, and he ain't saved him! Oh my Lawd!" she wailed in agony.

The Union Captain did not stir. His lips were set, his brow stern. He was thinking, "And this is war!"

Three years later Colonel Egbert Winwood, late of the Army of Northern Virginia, returned to his solitary home. Well might the county—what there was left of it—say that his Luck had forsaken him when the family treasure was burned in the court-house.

His wife had not long survived the death in battle of both sons, and the tragedy by which her only daughter had been widowed and deprived of reason.

Bertie, the younger boy, had, without seeing his parents, been caught in the impetuous movement of Lee's sloop into Maryland and had fallen at Sharpsburg. Ned's sword and Bertie's private's cap now hung together on the wall in the dining-room. The one had been lifted reverently by the father from the coffin-lid of his oldest born before they laid Ned away at Hollywood. The token of Bertie's brief military life was saved for the family by a brother soldier in the ranks, after the lad went down under hot fire, carrying with him the untold secret of the buried chests.

And Molly—poor Molly—pretty, winsome Molly—what of her? She was in a private retreat in Maryland, hopelessly insane. A sister-in-law of Hugh Sandys, the wife of a lawyer in Baltimore, had, upon learning of the sad events at Winwood, journeyed to Virginia; and finding matters much worse than she had dreamed of, had obtained Federal authority to take the crazed widow and her baby to her own home.

After Colonel Winwood laid down his sword at Lee's surrender, one of his first pilgrimages was to visit Molly. He had found her quiet, cheerful, blessedly oblivious of her past, greeting him as a child greets a friend it is bidden to welcome. She asked no questions about her baby; and the physicians said she might live to old age without a change in her mentality.

Then the Colonel went back to Baltimore and asked Mrs. Lewis Sandys to show him his little granddaughter. When they put the baby

in his arms, he for the first time broke down, and sobbed so bitterly that Mrs. Sandys and the attendants could only steal away and leave him to his grief.

Sixteen years of monotonous existence saw the Colonel still in solitude in the old house that, like its owner, was much the worse for wear. It had never recovered from the wreck of war. Occupied at times by each of the armies alternately, its shrubberies, trees, grounds, and gardens had been variously damaged; its fences had been pulled down, its original outbuildings rendered untenable. A fire—not accounted for—had totally destroyed what could be consumed of the still-room wing. Negroes, coming back to live on the old plantation, had long ago carried away the bricks and foundation-stones of what had been burned to construct chimneys for their own cabins. The site had not been again built upon, and the cellar was so filled with rubbish as to be but a shallow depression in the ground. Only grass and weeds, and a sumac-bush or two, and a vine of wild grapes growing from a seed carried by some heedless bird, attempted to hide it. There was no one living to tell what its desolation concealed to the bowed, gray, and sad old gentleman who had entered upon the evening of his life in the grip of distressing poverty.

The Colonel's two bright spots were, first, letters from his granddaughter Sylvia, whose Aunt Sandys, now a widow, had taken the child to Europe to educate, and had remained abroad till the present time; and, next, the visits of a young Englishman of his own name, the inmate of a neighbor's family, where he was "learning agriculture" with a view to settling in Virginia.

Jim Winwood did not claim relationship with the Colonel. He had been so much from home, and had knocked around the world so abundantly, that the ties of blood and the traditions of race did not seem to him of supreme importance. The Colonel—who sometimes said to him, "I shouldn't be in the least surprised if we came of the same stock, sir," or "If I had the pedigree we lost in the court-house fire, I dare say I could trace you out, Mr. Winwood"—was not, in these days, persistently zealous, even about the Virginian's Buddha, genealogy.

But Jim was strongly drawn to the gentle and courteous old gentleman; he liked to chat with him, to hear about the war, to tell him in return his own adventures in distant countries. Much more to his taste was bare, half-ruined Winwood than the spick-and-span, cheap new dwelling of the thrifty folk who had taken him in to board while acquainting himself with the soil and agricultural methods of this portion of the State.

It was another matter when the Colonel's lovely granddaughter

came back from school in France, and arrived with her Aunt Sandys to make a long visit.

Neither the tragedy that ushered in Sylvia's life, nor the death of her stricken mother, whom she had never known, had left a trace upon the girl's buoyancy of spirit. Molly's smile was forever upon her lips, Molly's laugh rang out in the dreary dwelling. And from Hugh Sandys she had inherited the pluck and daring that had brought the Black Captain to his death.

Jim, who had heard ghastly stories of this family's war experiences, wondered at Sylvia's brilliant gaiety and vitality. She burst upon her grandfather like a vision of new life. She caressed, humored, entertained him, mended his clothes, and filled his pipe; went to work with her rather conventional aunt to tidy and freshen up the house, and was all the time smitten to the heart by the evidences of a poverty she could not dissipate.

Mrs. Lewis Sandys's small income was barely enough to keep her charge and herself in decent equipment. Abroad, she had made it go far. What could she do in expensive America?

One evening's talk sufficed to put Jim and Sylvia upon terms of good-fellowship. At the next meeting he was hopelessly in love. After that, wild horses could not have kept him from haunting Winwood. And the next step was to beseech Sylvia to consider him a cousin.

"I know nothing of Virginia cousinships," said she, shaking her head; "but you may come with me, if you like, to pick some raspberries for tea."

Before they made exit from the raspberry patch Jim had advanced in his demands. Their month of daily intercourse in this remote spot had accomplished for Sylvia what it had done for him. Secretly, she thought him the handsomest, dearest, simplest, most straightforward man she had ever seen. But she was not prepared to admit as much to her newly declared lover.

"I like you," she said finally, "but love is not for me. Since I came here I see life in a new light. I never before realized what a blight is upon our race. We are by-gones, under the ban of Fate. My duty is to live here with grandpapa, to make the most of his poor shattered life, and when my own hour comes, to drop off alone."

He had never seen her look or heard her speak like this.

"Let me share your service," he besought. "I've been a wild fellow, but I have never ceased to be a gentleman. I pledge you my honor that I am fit to be your husband."

"I believe you," she flashed back at him. "But I shall never marry; or, let us say, I shall not marry until Winwood's Luck comes back to Winwood Hall."

Of course, Jim knew the story of the Luck. Everybody in Virginia had heard of it and had passed the talk along.

Had there been a peg to hang a hope upon he would have been happier.

Next day a tatterdemalion negro girl appeared in the garden before them, asking if Sylvia would please come to see an ailing old woman, one of the batch who had strayed back to end their days where they were born. Sylvia complied readily, Jim escorting her to the cabin door, set in burr-bushes and jimson-weeds. When she emerged, he was shocked to see the change upon her young face.

"I have been hearing what makes my heart ache," she said, unconsciously stretching out her chill hands to be taken in his warm clasp. "Old Erinnys is dying. She was a sister of Judy, who was with my mother in that awful scene I never fully knew about till now."

"Don't grieve yourself by dwelling upon it!" he exclaimed with passionate tenderness. "I wish the old crone had been in Ballyhack before she sent for you."

"But I must tell you something so strange. While Judy was loosening my mother's dress, after—she—fell——"

"Pray don't—dear, *dearest* Sylvia."

"How terrible it was! Ah, my poor mother! She found these."

Sylvia extended upon her rosy palm a pair of old-fashioned keys tied together with a faded blue ribbon. Jim took them to look at, kissing the hand more than once.

"When my mother saw the keys, she cried out in her delirium: 'Close the doors. *Please* close the doors. Not even the stars must see our buried "Luck."' Before that—listen, Jim—Judy had told Erinnys she knew very well that mamma and my uncle Bertie and old Bushrod, her husband, had been away all night *burying something*. She didn't know what it was, and had not dared to speak of it, for fear of her husband, whom she had watched and followed against his orders. After Bushrod's death Judy thought it was a visitation on her for having disobeyed him. So she made Erinnys swear, and swore herself, never to mention it."

"By Jove!" said Jim breathlessly, "we'll find it, Sylvia—you and I."

"Erinnys gives me the keys and tells me the story now because she is dying. She says she and Judy always believed the valuables were hidden about the place."

"By Jove!" ejaculated Jim again.

Colonel Winwood, who had survived many illusions, smiled wanly when he gave Sylvia and Jim permission to investigate. The passing of old Erinnys in the night, and identification of the keys as belonging

to two old book-chests that had come out from England to one of their ancestors, lent a shade of additional color to Sylvia's mirage.

"The diamonds alone, my child," said the Colonel, "would make a sufficient income for us to live upon, and to leave you after me."

It was woman's intuition that supplied the cue. The summer was ripening into autumn when Jim had exhausted exploration in all the spots he thought likely for such concealment. The bottom of an old well, the cellar beneath the house, the gardens, orchard, chicken-yard, even the "hant's walk"—an avenue of cedars leading into the negro burying-ground—all had proved unresponsive to his search.

The two young people were sitting side by side upon the ancient boards of the "back porch," where Sylvia's mother had stood when Captain Sandys was shot to death. From the hall inside, where the Colonel was now listening to Mrs. Sandys read aloud from a recent newspaper, a shaft of lamplight streamed over the pair. Jim had been telling Sylvia of certain good news that had come to him from home.

"Under your influence, dear, I took heart of grace and wrote to make up the quarrel with my parents. I have to-day a letter that shames me for keeping such long silence to them. They beg me to come home this winter, and my father will set me on my feet in a financial way. But I won't go unless I can take you, Sylvia."

"And I shall never go until we have found the 'Luck,' she answered saucily.

"That's the oddest part of it! I asked my father to look up the matter of 'Winwood's Luck,' and he has hunted it all out in the family documents. Your ancestor and mine were brothers; and yours, the elder, who had had a disappointment in love, gave up the estates to mine, and retired to the wilds of the new world with the 'Luck.' You see, Sylvia, the direful effects of a check to a Winwood's affections!"

"Never mind that," replied Sylvia, "until we have the wherewithal to make me an independent bride."

"There is always the chance, you know," suggested Jim, "that some soldier or a marauding negro may have possessed himself of your fortune. Don't stake too much upon it, Sylvia, dear; let me look out for you and for the Colonel too."

Sylvia threw back her head and gazed upward at the galaxies of bright stars of the Southern night. An idea had struck her.

"Why did we never think before, Jim, what my poor darling meant by asking them to close the doors so that not even the stars might see their work! What *doors* at Winwood could be so closed as to keep the stars from looking *down* inside?"

"If the big cellar had an outside opening," said Jim reflectively. "But it hasn't."

"That's it! That's it!" cried the girl, springing to her feet, a-tremble with excitement. "Don't you know that drawing of the house as it looked before the fire, that hangs on the wall in the study? Between those two odd little cupboards, built like bow windows on the outer wall of the still-room, is a pair of slanting cellar doors! It must have been those doors that my mother meant. They must have been at work near that spot. Oh Jim, dear, darling Jim, I feel in my bones we have struck it now!"

That same night, history—after twenty years—repeated itself. Jim, who had worked hard at his pick in the diamond diggings of Africa, dug and prodded with an eagerness he had never felt before. The Colonel dug with the vigor of second youth. The negro jack-of-all-trades about the place assisted, sleepily, but well. Sylvia, who had strong muscles, did her share with the rest. Even Mrs. Sandys, deputed to hold lanterns in suspected spots, took the infection and wanted to be in more active toil.

It was Sylvia to whom at last the glory fell of striking something hollow that gave a dull sound. Uttering a cry, she stood there—an image of Victory!

Day had come when the Colonel knelt before the rotting remnants of the chests that contained his long-lost treasure. Overflowing into the excavation they had made were salvers, beakers, candelabra, silver vessels of various other sorts and patterns, black as jet from contact with the chemicals of Mother Earth. The tattered cerements of costly silk that had covered them held here and there a gleam of their former golden hue. Of the silver nothing was missing. The papers and parchments returned to light damp, of course, but in condition to be read. And, last of all, Colonel Winwood found on the wooden bottom of a chest a number of little leathern bags.

From one of them he extracted with shaking fingers the sparkling diamonds that would redeem him from poverty and Winwood from decay.

The last of the little bags to yield up its precious contents enshrined an oval stone of palest green engraved in English text and surrounded by tarnished old Italian gold-work.

Holding this relic out to Jim, the old gentleman said with quaint formality:

"It is yours, cousin. After me there will be none to dispute your right to it; and I know that Sylvia will agree with me that 'Winwood's Luck' should go with the name."

"It doesn't matter about me, grandpapa," said Sylvia, like a sun-burst in their group, "since I too have promised to 'go with the name.'"

THE BARBAROUS BABE

By E. Ayrton



SHE was just a little four-year-old girl, whom I had been told off to "amuse," as they called it, and as I thought myself until I sank into my proper place of comparative insignificance. When we were left alone we sat looking at each other for some time in silence, I seeing a sweet, demure little face with a frame of flaxen curls; but what her wondering eyes took in I cannot tell, only they made me feel very large and world-worn. "Would you like to see my Baby?" she said, and, slipping down from her chair, she disappeared beneath the table, a mysterious underworld when one is only four.

I waited, wondering if I should see some cherished doll, or perhaps a cushion baby, but when she came out her hands were quite empty, although held out carefully.

"Isn't he a dear little mite?" she asked suddenly, looking down with a tender mother-love shining in her eyes, and she began to rock the outstretched arms, as though they indeed held a little baby.

"I'll put him on the gground," she said at last; "he likes to toddle;" and the fictitious baby was gently set down. Then she began to tell me his history. "Do you know," she said, "that there was a fire in this baby's house? He brought away his kitty, but his mover an' faver an' bwover an' nurse were all burnt."

"Not killed!" I ejaculate, startled at the completeness of the catastrophe.

"Burnt to ashes," she assures me with a delicate glee.

And as I sit pondering over the barbarity of childhood, I hear the soft little voice say wistfully, "My faver's coming home on Fursday week."

"What will you say when you see him?" I ask unthinkingly.

She turns rather red. "I shall not say anything. I'll be too happy for that," she whispers.

But before I have realized this glimpse of a love almost womanly in its expression, she looks round to where the imaginary baby is playing with the equally imaginary kitten. Her whole face lights up with a look wonderful to see. "Those two dear little tots are playing together so sweetly," she murmurs; "why, the kitty has got into the

waste-paper basket. Please may I tie up your dog, or he might frighten the pets?"

So my big collie is dragged off to a distant corner and there tied up with a "pretence" cord, but, being a dog of a gentlemanly disposition, he seems to find it as binding as the heaviest of steel chains; or has he too entered this dream-world, whose shadowy boundaries I find so hard to cross?

And then I hear a gentle crooning and the sound of soft kisses, but I see it is that lucky dream-baby upon whom this tenderness is being lavished.

"Do you know," the real child says in wondering tones,— "do you know this poor baby of mine had a sister called Jemima, who was very cwuel to him. She used always to take away his bottle. I cannot think how she could do such a thing, can you? But we cut off Jemima's hands and feet——"

"Oh, no, we did not," I contradict, startled out of all politeness.

"Scuse me, we did," the tender voice urges; "scuse me, we cut them off an' stewed them. Then we killed her with scissors."

But as I remonstrate upon the enormity of the punishment compared with the crime, the small executioner relents, and finally adopts my suggestion of sending the ill-fated Jemima to a boarding-school—a very strict one. "But it was a school in South Afwica," she stipulates, and I know she is finding consolation in the thought of there being stray lions and tigers ready to make a meal off naughty little girls who remove babies' bottles.

And again I feel that children are very cruel, and that as we grow older, what we lose in imagination we surely gain in tenderness, but my thoughts are interrupted by a book being thrust into my hands, and a baby voice asking for "a story, please."

I select one at random; it is the "Babes in the Wood;" but before I have finished the first page I hear a little sound, and, looking up, I see two blue eyes drowned in tears.

"Shall I stop?" I ask compunctiously, but the baby shakes her head.

But before we reach the end, two soft arms are flung round my neck and a damp face is pressed to my cheek.

"Poor, poor little wobin wedbweasts!" she sobs unexpectedly. "What a lot of leaves they had to carry!"

MRS. NORTH

AN UNWRITTEN CHAPTER WITH SOME COMMENTS

By "M. B. James"



MRS. NORTH lay in a reclining-chair in the cheerless room of a summer hotel in the Adirondacks. She was alone, and her only companion for some days past had been a trained nurse, whose kindness was perfunctory and whose companionship was uncongenial. Mrs. North was a woman of about fifty years and was languishing under an incurable malady. Her face, whose lines betrayed the effects of almost continuous suffering, showed still some traces of attractiveness, and with her fragile form presented the pathetic spectacle of beauty wasted by disease. Through her eyes, deep-set and still brilliant, there yet shone the fine spirituality of a noble and beautiful soul. To those who had watched the slow but unceasing progress of the disease which had stricken her into childish helplessness, it was evident that the long struggle for life was nearly ended, and that behind her stood an invisible but importunate suitor, Death, who claimed her for the indissoluble wedlock of the grave.

She had not seen Senator North for many weeks. He had come to the Adirondacks after the adjournment of Congress and spent a few hours of each day with her during his stay, but he gave the remainder of his time to a young unmarried girl of some respectability but no self-respect, whom he met each day by appointment in the retirement of the woods, and with whom he rowed, fished, and made love.

The flirtation between this grave, wedded, and unromantic Romeo and the progressive fin-de-siècle Juliet had become sufficiently notorious, even in a summer hotel, to influence his return to Washington.

An occasional letter came from him to Mrs. North, in which he addressed his wife as "dear old friend," an expression which struck her as a sharp blow when she recalled the fond and passionate terms with which he had addressed her in former years before her beauty had been blighted by disease. For his absence he pleaded his public engagements, but Mrs. North well knew that this was only the cowardly evasion of a man who dared not compromise his public station by a complete desertion of an invalid wife, and who therefore paid her the cold respect of an occasional call and a periodical letter. She knew—for kind friends had not spared her the mortal anguish of

the revelation—that for a year past her husband had been engaged in an intrigue with an ambitious and not over-scrupulous young Washington girl, who had not paid to conventionality even the small tribute of calling upon Mrs. North and thus securing some sanction for the friendly relations with her husband. She knew that the Senator had met the girl, who was young enough to be his daughter, at a dinner-party, had sought her acquaintance, and become a constant visitor at her home, where he spent many hours which would have been better spent in the sick-room of the wife whose health he had sacrificed. The intrigue had become a sweet morsel of scandalous gossip in the mouths of the Mrs. Grundys of Washington, of which some rumor had reached the sick-room of the wife, to her great grief and mortification.

Had Mrs. North known much of Miss Betty, she could have palliated her offence against sound morals and good breeding, for it is clear from the history of Senator North (of which this is but a discarded or unwritten chapter) that Miss Betty was by heredity somewhat frail in virtue, for she was the daughter of a man who had stooped to mingle his blood with that of a negress (charming topic for a romance!).

The hereditary influence had not been without its usual effects, for Miss Betty had only met Senator North in a casual way at a dinner-party when she decided to send him a box of rare cigars, and while she then exercised some self-restraint, she subsequently called upon the Senator and asked his advice as to the shady revelations of her father's conduct, thus doubly shaming to one who was almost a stranger both the living and the dead. Her subsequent freedom from the conventionalities of morality can be readily anticipated. To most young girls an intrigue with a married man advanced in years could be neither moral nor pleasing. To our latter-day heroine it was nobly romantic and altogether lovely.

The Senator had less excuse, and this Mrs. North well knew. He had so far anticipated her death as to be indifferent to her feelings or wishes. His selfish regard for public place caused him to temper his love for Miss Betty with some small measure of prudence, and his cold intellectual nature deliberately calculated to what lengths he could carry his intrigue without too great a compromise of his reputation. His clear mind probably divined that the seventh commandment could be violated in thought and word, as well as in deed. He broke it in all but the last, making open and avowed professions of love to the amorous Betty, in the interchange of which their relations were discussed by both with a bluntness of expression that left nothing to conjecture or imagination.

Senator North was no hypocrite. His morality was fully abreast

with this progressive age. His great maxim was, as he wrote to Miss Betty, that a "mistaken sense of duty has been the cause of quite one-fourth of the unhappiness of mankind." His biographer leaves us in no doubt that he lost no happiness from this cause. Twice he had taken the young girl in his arms and kissed her, and then, with an unctuous self-complacency, had admired his own self-restraint.

During these last days in the Adirondacks, when Mrs. North's life was slowly ebbing away, the Senator, after talking his wife to sleep,—for which he had, like most Senators, exceptional experience and qualifications, had slipped away to the woods, met the respectable Miss Betty, and spent hours with her in mutual protestations of affection which were unmarked by the limitations of old-fashioned modesty. Thus this new Abelard and Heloise anticipated a death which both desired.

As Mrs. North gazed from her window over mountain and lake and felt her sole solace in the cooling air of the pines, that bespoke the eternal morning soon to dawn for her, she thought of her youth and the early days of her married life. She recalled her first meeting with North. It was at a reception given by her father in the Executive Mansion. North was then unknown and almost friendless, and was taking his first steps in the slippery path of political life. She was then a social belle, whose hand had been sought by many suitors and whose beauty knew no rival. How passionately he had pleaded for her love! Once, in the bantering spirit of Rosalind, she had asked, half in jest and half in earnest,—

"If I were old or should be stricken with an incurable illness, would your love endure?"

With that prodigality of expression common to lovers and politicians he replied:

"Dearest, do not even in a teasing spirit question the height and breadth and depth of my love for you. I love more than your beauty, I love your soul, and disease cannot blight that."

Then, clasping her in his arms, he had breathed in her ear, with the ardor of the most impassioned lover, those noble lines of Bayard Taylor:

"I love thee, I love but thee,
With a love that shall not die,
Till the sun grows cold
And the stars are old
And the leaves of the Judgment-Book unfold."

Alas! Mrs. North had learned since her illness that these professions had the heat of a summer wind and were as transitory. The Senator had changed his views. His opinion now was, as he had told Miss Betty, that "love is the result of two responsive sparks coming

within each other's range of action. Their owners may be in certain ways unfitted for one another, but the responsive sparks, rising Nature only knows out of what combination of elements, fly straight, and Reason sulks." His one limitation on this doctrine of the irresponsibility of love was that the faculty must not be "overworked," lest it be "coarsened." This definition of the divine passion had at least the merit of candor, and some years ago would have been enthusiastically acclaimed in Utah, where they openly taught, until restrained by criminal laws, the infallible dogma of matrimony at the ratio of 16 to 1.

Mrs. North also remembered her wedding-day. In her imagination he again stood erect and radiant at the chancel-rail and again she heard his solemn vow:

"I take thee to my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death do us part."

As she sat alone in her room and thought of the bitter mockery of the words in the light of her husband's acts the hot tears blinded her eyes.

She called to mind their early married life, and how cheerfully she had sacrificed everything for him. He was then a young lawyer, practising little but economy. She had left her father's luxurious home and shared her husband's comparative poverty in those first years of struggle. She had helped him advance step by step, and when her father died she had freely placed her ample inheritance at his disposal, by which—in some way he did not venture to explain—he had become a Senator of the United States. She had borne him sons, and each one had nearly cost her her life. He wished a daughter. The child was born at the sacrifice of the mother's health, and left her with a wasting disease, which finally culminated in paralysis.

At first Mrs. North had taken the unselfish but foolish joy of a good woman in the reflection that she had sacrificed her health for the man she loved, but soon she learned that with men of Senator North's type love was the thing of a day, to be put off and on as a garment at the pleasure of the wearer, and that such love knew neither gratitude, respect, nor unselfishness. She daily noted that his indifference grew with the wasting of her health, and this caused her keener anguish than the physical pain of her malady. Then she learned of the Senator's frequent meetings with Miss Betty, at her home, at public receptions and other social functions, and in the Senate gallery, and the publicity of the liaison stabbed the invalid to the very heart. At first she maintained a proud silence, but one day, when the Senator on one of his Sunday morning calls commented upon her changed appearance, she replied with pardonable bitterness that the humiliation

to which his selfish passion had subjected her had caused the drawn lines of the face, marked at times by scalding tears. She begged him to spare her further humiliations in the few months which remained to her of life; but even this slight return for her sacrifice was denied, and the brilliant Senator, with the mind of a statesman and the soul of a scoundrel, continued in the cold selfishness of his sensuality—that “sensuality” which we are told by his biographer Miss Betty so much admired—to dishonor his dying wife, disgrace his children, and compromise his would-be mistress.

This is the tale of Senator North. It is not a nice one, and is only told to point a moral. The writer of this article did not originate it. It will all be found in a recent novel of general circulation, where the reader may learn the full particulars of this uplifting romance. He will there learn that before Mrs. North's death Miss Betty, fearful that what she called her “self-restraint” might yield, avoided further temptation by engaging herself in marriage to a friend whom she did not love and whom she promptly discarded on hearing of Mrs. North's death. Having thus broken faith with an honorable man, she, with characteristic immodesty, wrote to North to come to her, although his wife had been dead but a few weeks, and he—not behind her in cold disrespect to the dead—hurried to her, and there the novelist mercifully draws the veil.

That such an intrigue could happen in life may be freely conceded. It may with proper treatment be even made the subject of a romance. The novel, viewed as a species of literature, is a clinic, at which human character is dissected and the bad as well as the good, the diseased as well as the wholesome, must be laid bare by the dissecting-knife. To know the truth of life is necessary, even though it sometimes be ghastly and repulsive. When Thackeray presents to our imagination that scene in Becky's drawing-room, when she receives the Marquis of Steyne in her husband's enforced absence, he teaches a needed lesson in a masterly parable, that love may be cold, sordid, cruel, and remorseless. Balzac's “My Cousin Betty” is not a book virginibus puerisque, but it impressively teaches in the character of Madame Marneffe that with the Scarlet Woman “the wages of sin is death.” The Phariseism of our time has condemned the “Kreutzer Sonata,” “Sappho,” and “The Resurrection,” unmindful of the fact that they are works of purest morality, in that they teach us to hate vice and love virtue.

Tried by this standard, the novel, “Senator North,” should be included in the Index Expurgatorius of every healthy mind, for it idealizes a cruel, immoral, and unromantic intrigue.

We can pardon the sentimentalism of the Gaul, who to this day casts wreaths upon the tombs of Abelard and Heloise, for both were unmarried and the sport of cruel circumstance, but why should a novel intended for general circulation, and presumably written to entertain rather than instruct, attempt to exalt the morals of the barn-yard into a social ideal? To the experienced adult it may be harmless, for it illustrates Miss Betty's epigram that "to be immoral is to be stupid," but romantic girls may follow the novelist in her evident admiration for the Senator and Miss Betty and forget the fact that marital infidelity can be moral as well as physical.

If we are to tolerate a school of fiction whose motif is the praise of illicit love, will we not one day need another Juvenal to lash the morals of society with the whip of satire? Wealth and luxury are sapping the morals of the American people rapidly enough. Shall we encourage novels which tend to accelerate the corruption of private life and the destruction of the family relation?



ASPIRATION

BY MADISON CAWEIN

O H, for a soul that fulfils
 Music like that of a bird!
 Thrilling with rapture the hills,
 Heedless if any have heard.

Or, like the flower that blooms
 Lone in the midst of the trees,
 Filling the woods with perfumes,
 Careless if anyone sees.

Or, like the wandering wind,
 Over the meadow that swings,
 Bringing wild sweets to mankind,
 Knowing not that which it brings.

Oh, for a way to impart
 Beauty, no matter how hard!
 Like unto nature, whose art
 Never once dreams of reward.

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER MARY McARTHUR CUT HER FINGER

By S. R. Crockett

Author of "The Lilac Sunbonnet," "The Stickit Minister," etc.



WHEN I am putting together the family stories I may as well tell my father's. Sometimes we of a younger day thought him stiff, silent, out of sympathy with our interests and amusements. But the saving salt of humor made this only seeming. In reality, tolerance and kindest understanding beacons from under the covert of his gray eyebrows.

There was the savor of an infinite discernment in his slow "Aye?" with which he was wont to receive any doubtful statement. My mother said ever ten words for his one, and it was his wont to listen to her gravely and unsmilingly, as if giving the subject the profoundest attention, while all the time his thoughts were far away—a fact well understood and much resented by his wife.

"What am I talkin' about, Saunders?" she would say, pausing in the midst of a commination upon some new and garish fashion in dress, or the late hours kept by certain young men not a thousand miles away.

"Oh, the second commandment," he would reply, "the heavens above, the earth beneath, and the waters under the earth!"

"Havers," she would reply, her face glancing at him bright as a new-milled shilling, "your thochts were awa' on the mountains o' vanity! Naething richt waukens ye but a minister to argue wi'!"

And, indeed, that was a true word. For though an unusually silent man, my father, Alexander McQuhirr, liked nothing better than a minister to argue with—if one of the Kirk of Scotland, well and good. There was the Revolution settlement, the headship of Christ, the power of the civil magistrate. My father enjoyed himself thoroughly, and if the minister were worthy, so did he. But it took a Cameronian or an Original Secession really to rouse within him what my mother called "his bowels of wrath."

"There is a distinct Brownist strain in your opinions, Alexander,"

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Mr. Osbourne would say—his own minister from the kirk on the hill. "Your father's name was not Abel for nothing!" *

Mr. Osbourne generally reminded him of this when he had got the worse of some argument on the true inwardness of the Marrow controversy. He did not like to be beaten, and my father was a dour arguer. Once it is recorded that the minister brought all the way up to Drumquhat on a communion Friday—the "off day" as it were of the Scottish Holy Week—the great Dr. Marcus Lawton himself from Edinburgh. It happened to be a wettish day in the lull between hay and harvest. My father was doing something in the out-house, where he kept his joiner's tools, and the two ministers joined him there early in the forenoon. They were into "free-will" before my father was at the end of the board he was planing. "Prædestination" was the overword of their conversation at the noonday meal, which all seemed to partake of as dispassionately as if they had been stoking a fire—this to the great indignation of my mother, who, having been warned of the proposed honor, had given herself even more completely to hospitality than was usual with her.

Mr. Osbourne, indeed, made a pretext of talking to her about the price of butter and how her hens were laying. But she saw through him even as he spoke.

For, as she said afterwards, describing the scene, "I saw his lug cockit for what they were saying, and if it hadna been for the restrainin' grace o' God, I declare I wad hae telled him that butter was a guinea a pound in Dumfries market and that my hens were laying a score o' eggs apiece every day—he never wad hae kenned that I was tellin' a lee!"

All day the great controversy went on. I can remember the echoes of it coming to me through the wet green leaves of the mallows my mother had planted along the southlooking wall. To this day I can hear the drip of the water from the slates mingling with such phrases as "the divine sovereignty," the "covenant of works," "the Adamic dispensation." I see the purple of the flowers and smell the sweet smell of the pine shavings. They seemed like Titans hurling the longest words in the dictionary at each other. I know nothing wherewith to express the effect upon my mind of this day-long conflict, save that great line in the fifth book of "Paradise Lost:"

"Thrones, dominations, principedoms, virtues, powers!"

It was years after that when first I read it, but instantly I thought of that wet summer day in Lammas-tide, when my father wrestled with

* "Abel," "Jacob," "Abraham" were not common names in Scotland, and such as occurred in families during last century might often be traced to the time of Cromwellian occupation. David and Samuel were the only really common Old Testament names at the time.

his peers concerning the deep things of eternity and was not overcome.

My mother has told me how that he never slept all that night, how, waking in the dawn and finding his place vacant, she had hastily thrown on a gown and gone out to look for him. He was walking up and down in the little orchard behind the barn, his hands clasped behind his back. And all he said in answer to her reproaches was, "It's vexin', Mary, to think that I only minded that text in Ephesians about being 'sealed unto the day of redemption' after he was ower the hill. It wad hae ta'en the feet clean frae him if I had gotten it in time."

"What can ye do wi' a man like that?" she would conclude, summing up her husband's character, mostly in his hearing.

"But remember, Mary, the pit from which I was digged!" he would reply, raxing the worn old leather-bound copy of Boston's "Fourfold State" out of the wall-press and settling himself to re-peruse a favorite chapter.

But if she continued too long in this strain, my father would be moved to produce out of a locked box a piece of old blue cloth.

"Ye are a clever woman, Mary, but there are twa things that are hid frae ye, theology—and darnin'!"

At first sight it is no more than a rather thick piece of ancient blue sea-cloth, being, in fact, the broadest and not least important part of a pair of trousers which once belonged to my father's father, Abel—or, as he was universally called, Yabel McQuhirr. The legs have long disappeared, probably made into garments for the legs of younger generations. But this that to the eye male was a mere fragment of blue cloth, was to the connoisseur of the opposite sex a true work of art. Indeed, once from a safe retreat under a dining-table I saw it tried on a jury of matrons. For though my mother hated to have her mother-in-law's handiwork "cast up to her," yet for all that she took a perverted kind of pride in it, as on the whole reflecting honor on the family. She would upon occasion draw it from its retirement and spread it reverently before an audience few but fit, much as a collector will unlock a portfolio with a sigh to display an Albert Dürer so rare that he never lets his eye leave it even when in the hands of his twin brother.

I remember to this day the uplifted hands of wonder, the quick gabble of admiration: "Saw ye ever the like o' that?" "It coves a'!" "Weel! Weel! It maun be seen to be believed!" "It's juist no possible!"

My mother, who had suffered many things from my father on this account, took the praise with nonchalance. It was, after all, a family affair, and as such not to be bragged about. For this plain blue cloth was really a patchwork so deftly and delicately put together that it seemed a breadth straight from the loom, one and indivisible. I have

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often asked my mother for it in these latter days. I want to frame it under glass and hang it in Nance's room as a provocation to good works. But my mother will not part with it. She keeps it to show to the brides.

For this was my grandmother's poetry. It may be said that she enshrined her soul in these darns. She was grateful for a ragged coat. She turned from a whole one with a sudden lack of interest. But on a garment that seemed a ruin she fell with tears of gratitude in her eyes. For Yabel McQuhirr was a fierce, hard man, and seldom showed his heart, ruling his house with a rod of iron, setting each in his place, wife, child, man-servant and maid-servant, ox and ass—aye, and the stranger within his gates.

My father does not talk of these things, but my mother has often told me of that strange household up among the granite hills, to which as a maid of nineteen she went to serve. In those days in all the farm-towns master and servant sat down together to meals. The head of the house was lawgiver and potentate, priest and parent, to all beneath his roof. And if Yabel McQuhirr of Ardmannoch did not exercise the right of pit and gallows, it was about all the authority he did not claim.

Yabel had a family of strong sons, silent, dour, the doctrine of unquestioning obedience driven into them by their father's right arm and oaken staff. But their love was for their mother, who drifted through the house with a foot light as a falling leaf, and a voice attuned to the murmur of a hill stream. There was no daughter in the household, and Mary McArthur had come to supply the want. She had brought a sore little heart with her, all because of a certain ship that had gone over the sea and the glint of a lad's merry blue eyes she would see no more.

She had no mind for love-making, and Thomas and Abel, the two eldest sons, got very short answers for their pains when they "tried their hand" on their mother's new house-lass. Tom, the eldest, took it well enough and went elsewhere, but Abel was a bully by nature and would not let the girl alone. Once he had kissed her by force as she carried in the peats from the stack. Whereupon Alexander, the silent third brother, found out the reason of Mary's red eyes, and interviewed his brother behind the barn to such purpose that his face bore the marks of fraternal knuckles for a week. Also Alexander had his lip split.

"Ye hae been fechtin' again, ye blakes," thundered their father. "Mind ye, if this happens again I will break every bone in your bodies. I will have you know that I am a man of peace! How did you get that black eye, Yabel?"

"I trippit ower the shaft o' a cairt!" said Abel, lying glibly in fear of consequences.

"And you, Alexander—where gat ye that lip?"

"I ran against something!" said the defender of innocence succinctly,—and stuck to it stubbornly, refusing all amplification.

"Well," said their father grimly, "take considerably more heed to your going, or you may run against something more serious still!"

Then he whistled on his dogs and went up the dike-side towards the hill.

After this Alexander always carried in the peats for Mary McArthur, and, in spite of the taunts and gibes of his brothers, did such part of her work for her as lay outside the house. On winter nights and mornings he lighted the stable lantern for her before she went to milk the cows, and then when she was come to the byre he took his mother's stool and a pail and milked beside her cow for cow.

All these things he did without speaking a word of love, or, indeed, a word of anything beyond the commonplaces of a country life. He never told her whether or no he had heard about the sailor-lad who had gone over seas.

Indeed, he never referred to the subject throughout a long lifetime. All the same, I think he must have suspected, and with natural gentleness and courtesy he set himself to ease the girl's burden.

Sometimes she would raise her eyes and catch him looking at her—that was all. And more often she was conscious of his grave, staid regard when she did not look up. At first it fretted her a little. For, of course, she could never love again—never believe any man's word. Life was ended for her—ended at nineteen! So at least she told herself.

But all the same there, a pillar for support, a buckler for defence, was Alexander McQuhirr, strong, undemonstrative, dependable. One day she had cut her finger, and he was rolling it up for her daintily as a woman. They were in the shearing-field together. Alexander had the lint and the thread in his pocket. So he anticipated her wants silently all his life.

It had hurt a good deal, and before he had finished the tears stood brimming in her eyes.

"I think you must get tired. I bring all my cut fingers to you, Alec!" she said, looking up at him.

He gave a kind of gasp, as if he were going to say something, as a single drop of salt water pearly itself and ran down Mary's cheek, but instead he only folded the lint in at the top and went on rolling the thread round it.

"She is learnin' to love me!" he thought with some pleasure, but he was too bashful and diffident to take advantage of her feeling. He contented himself with making her life easier and sweeter in that hard upland cantonment of more than military severity from which Yabel and his sons dragged the bare necessities of life, as it were, at the point of the bayonet.

362 After Mary McArthur Cut Her Finger

All the time he was thinking behind his broad forehead, this quiet Alexander McQuhirr. He was the third son. His father was a poor man. He had nothing to look for from him. In time Tom would succeed to the farm. It was clear that if he was ever to be anything, he must strike out early for himself. And as many a time before and since, it was the tears in the eyes of a girl that brought matters to the breaking point.

Yes, the wet eyes of a girl—that is, of Mary McArthur as she looked up suddenly in the harvest-field among the serried lines of stooks and said, "I think I bring all my cut fingers to you, Alec!"

Something, he knew not exactly what, appealed to him so strongly in that word and look, that resolve came upon him sudden as lightning and binding as an oath—the man's instinct to be all and to do all for the woman he loves.

He was unusually silent during the rest of the day, so that Mary McArthur, walking beside him down the loaning to bring home the cows, said, "You are no vexed wi' me for onything, Alec?"

But it was the soul of Saunders McQuhirr which had come to him as a birthright—born out of a glance. He was a boy no longer. And that night as his father Yabel stood looking over his scanty acres with a kind of grim satisfaction in the golden array of corn stooks, his son Alexander went quietly up to him.

"Father," he said, "next week I shall be one-and-twenty!" In times of stress they spoke the language of the schools and of the Bible.

His father turned a deepset, irascible eye upon him. The thick overbrooding brows lowered upon him. A kind of illuminating flash, like faint sheet-lightning, passed over the stern face. A week ago, nay, even twenty-four hours ago, Saunders McQuhirr would have trembled to have his father look at him thus. But—he has bound up a girl's finger since then and seen her eyes wet.

"Well, what of that?"

The words came fiercely from Yabel, with a rising anger in them, a kind of trumpet heralding the storm.

"I am thinking of taking a herd's place at the term," said Alexander quietly.

Yabel lifted his great body off the dike-top on which he had been leaning with his elbows. He towered a good four inches above his son, though my father was always considered a tall man.

"You—you are going to take a herd's place—at the term—you?" he said slowly and incredulously.

"Yes," answered his son, "you will not need me. There is no outgate for me here and I have my way to make in the world."

"And what need have you of an outgate, sir?" cried his father. "Have I housed you and schooled you and reared you that when at last

you are of some use, you should leave your father and mother like a day-laborer on Saturday night?"

"A day-laborer on Saturday night gets his wages—I have not asked for any!"

At this answer Yabel stood tempestuously wrathful for a moment, his hand and arm uplifted and twitching to strike. Then, all suddenly, his mood changed; it became scornfully ironic.

"I see," he said, dropping his arm, "there's a lass behind this—that is the meaning of all the peat-carrying and milking and handfasting in corners. Well, sirrah, I give you this one night. In the morning you shall pack. From this instant I forbid you to touch aught belonging to me, corn or fodder, horse or bestial. Ye shall tramp, lad, you and your madam with you. The day is not yet, thank the Lord, when Abel McQuhirr is not master in his own house!"

But the son that had been a boy was now a man. He stood before his father, giving him back glance for glance. And an observer would have seen a great similarity between the two, the same attitude to a line, the head thrown back, the foot advanced, the deep-set eye, the compressed mouth.

"Very well, father," said Alexander McQuhirr, and he went away, carrying his bonnet in his hand.

And on the morning that followed the sleepless night of thinking and planning Alexander McQuhirr went forth to face the world, his plaid about his shoulders, his staff in his hand, his mother's blessing upon his head—and what was most of all to a young man, his sweetheart's kiss upon his lips.

For in this part of his mandate Yabel had reckoned without his host. His wife, long trained to obedience for the sake of peace, had turned and openly defied him—nay, had won the victory. The "man of violence" knew exactly how far it was wise to push the doctrine of unquestioning wifely obedience. Mary McArthur was to bide still where she was till—well, till another home was ready for her. And though her eyes were red and there was no one to bind up her cut fingers any more, there was a kind of pride in her face too. And the image of the young man over seas utterly faded away.

At ten by the clock Yabel McQuhirr, down in his harvest field, saw his son set out. He gave no farewell. He waved no hand. He said no word. All the same, he smiled grimly to himself behind the obedient backs of Tom and Abel the second.

"There's the best stuff o' the lot in that laddie," he growled. "Even so for a lass's sake left I my father's house."

And of all his children this dour, hard-mouthed man loved best the boy who for the sake of a lass had outcasted himself.

364 "Life and Death go Forth Each Day"—Fire-Flies

It was to a herd's house shining white on a hill-side, a bonny burnie trilling below, the red heather surging about the garden dike on all sides, that Alexander McQuhirr took his wife Mary a year later. And there in the fulness of time my brother Willie was born—the child of the cot-house and of the peasant. In time followed other, if not better things—first a small holding, then a farm, then I, Alexander the Second. And still, thank God, we, the children of Mary McArthur, run with all our cut fingers to that steadfast, loving, silent man, Saunders McQuhirr, son of Yabel, the Man of Violence.

I think we learned the trick from my mother.



"LIFE AND DEATH GO FORTH EACH DAY"

BY GERALDINE MEYRICK

LIFE and Death go forth each day;
Which one would you meet?
Death is grim, but Life is gay;
Hey, but Life is sweet!

Yet, when Fate hath adverse mind,
Many cry with heat:
"Life is cruel, and Death is kind;
Hey, but Death is sweet!"

Life or Death—what need to care
Which it is you meet?
Death is kind, and Life is fair;
Hey, but both are sweet!



FIRE-FLIES

BY CORA A. MATSON DOLSON

THE Day, disrobing for her rest,
Delayed to lift the twilight bars;
And o'er them, from the golden west,
Wandered this troop of truant stars.

VILLAGE LIFE IN MEDIAEVAL ENGLAND

By Professor Edward P. Cheyney

Of the University of Pennsylvania

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IF we could look out over a broad farming country in mediæval England the first and most conspicuous characteristic, the thing that would most strike us as different from what we are used to, would be the fact that all houses were grouped in villages. We are familiar with the habit of living in which the farm-houses are scattered pretty evenly through a whole country, each perhaps a quarter of a mile or more from its nearest neighbors. But our isolated farm-houses, each surrounded by its own buildings and fields and pastures, were almost unknown in the Middle Ages. Instead, the farm-houses of a whole township were gathered into one group, and the lands which all these farmers cultivated stretched around the village a mile, or two or three perhaps, in every direction. So that from some hill-top one could perhaps see half a dozen villages, each surrounded by a wide expanse of arable land, with perhaps an occasional patch of woods or uncultivated stretch of pasture.

The next point that would strike one would probably be the extent to which the land was open. No fences, no walls, no hedges separated it into fields such as we are used to. The land that lay around the village was in reality one great open field, stretching away in all directions till it reached the confines of the open land of another village. A closer examination, however, would show that this open land was really divided into small narrow strips or pieces, separated from one another by imaginary lines or by narrow strips of sod left unploughed. These separate pieces or strips were acres, or perhaps half or quarter or double acres.

We are apt to think of an acre as a square piece of ground. But the old statute says that an acre is four rods wide and forty rods long. It represents probably an early estimate of the amount of land that would be ploughed by one team in one day; and its length of forty rods was a "furlong," that is, a furrow long, the length of a furrow. A rood was, as its name indicates, a fourth of such an acre, one rod wide and forty rods long. Approximately into such strips the arable fields were

divided. There were, of course, somewhere in the vicinity of the village meadows and woods and undivided pasture land, but after all the arable field was the most conspicuous as it was the most important part of the village land.

This landscape of concentrated villages, open fields, and scattered strips did not belong to the Middle Ages alone. Although it has almost disappeared from England, it has survived in many parts of Europe. No one can have travelled in the Rhine country or passed through eastern France in the early summer without having noticed the curious striping of the land around the villages. Alternate patches of grain whitening to the harvest, of dark green clover, or of soil freshly ploughed seem to be arranged in some great picturesque pattern.

From such open fields the English villagers made their living. They were generally small farmers. A typical villager occupied one of the houses, and had near-by, usually, it is to be feared, under the same roof with himself and his family, some stable and barn accommodations for his live-stock. His land lay out in the open fields, but not all in one place. The farm of each man was made up of acres or small pieces scattered over the village lands and to all appearances inextricably mingled with the pieces belonging to the other men. Thirty or forty of such pieces were not unusual as the holding of one man, and these might not add up to more than ten or twenty acres altogether. Besides these acres, he had rights of mowing on common meadows and rights of pasturage in common pastures and over the whole village lands after the crops had been taken off. A village cowherd or shepherd or swineherd gathered up the animals of the villagers, tended them through the day for a small fee, and returned them to places of protection at night.

Unfortunately for the villagers, they could not devote their whole time to the cultivation of their own plots. The village really belonged to some lord, who usually held in his direct possession a large number, perhaps a half, of the scattered strips on the open fields, besides occasionally some enclosed pieces. The villagers, as part of the conditions of holding their own small farms, were obliged to provide the labor which cultivated his, a service which, as we shall see, frequently absorbed much more than half their time.

In their relations to the lord of the manor all of the villagers were tenants. All held their land from him on various conditions of tenure, all paid to him rent or services, all owed to him fealty, all were subject to his jurisdiction, at least in petty matters. But among themselves there was one great division: some of the villagers were free, others were in serfdom. In our worship of the tradition of English liberty we are apt to forget that until the last four or five centuries the great mass of Englishmen were anything but free; they were quite as distinctly serfs as were the agricultural laborers of Russia until 1861. Freedom

was the condition of townsmen and of the upper classes in the country, but not of the rank and file of the rural population. If our village was a typical one in the thirteenth century, the great mass of the inhabitants, two-thirds of them or more, were not freemen but serfs. They are frequently described in the records as "villains," or "customary tenants," that is, they are those who, according to custom, hold their land and perform their services and pay their fines and submit to their burdens as they have always done and as their forefathers have done before them, as they will continue to do and their descendants after them. They are simply the rank and file of the villagers, living in a customary servitude to the lord of the manor.

The distinction between freemen and villains was not always a very broad one; it was often hard to decide whether a man's claim that he was a freeman was valid or not. But certain characteristics of the villain's position were quite clear. In the first place, he could not leave the manor. Where he was born a serf, there he must abide; if he ran away, the lord could obtain a writ from the court and reclaim him, as a Southern slave-owner could his slave. Secondly, his services to the lord were extremely burdensome. A typical instance from the list of tenants and their services in a village of Cambridgeshire in 1279 runs as follows: "William Modi is a customary tenant of Sir Baldwin, and holds from him a house and twelve acres of land. And for these he owes two days' work in each week from the 29th of September to the 1st of August, at whatever he shall be summoned to do; . . . and he shall plow every Friday half a rood of land; . . .

"And from the first of August to the 29th of September, in each week during harvest he shall reap two acres of grain; and in each week he shall provide a special service with two men. . . . And after harvest he shall do four days' work in each week. And he owes two carrying services in the year, one to Canterbury, one to St. Ives. And he shall mow in the meadow of the lord for the whole of one day, as one of his services. And he owes at Christmas four hens and a cock and forty eggs, and at Easter forty eggs, and on St. Peter's day he shall give five ducks. And about Christmas time he shall thresh in the barn of his lord sixteen bushels of barley, and make malt of this at his house and dry it and then carry it to the mill to be ground, and from the mill to the kitchen of his lord. . . . And he shall be reeve if his lord wishes; and he cannot marry his daughter without the permission of his lord. . . . And he has sixteen fellow-tenants . . . who all do in all things and for all things just as the same William Modi does." Thirdly, the villain could not appeal to the general courts. If it could once be proved to the satisfaction of the judge that he was a serf, he had no standing in court, and if he wished justice anywhere he must seek it in the manor court of his lord. Lastly, the villain had to submit

to many vexatious fines and payments from which the freeman escaped. A fee on the marriage of his daughter, a heriot, or payment in kind, taken from his property when he died, a money fine to the lord when he obtained or disposed of a piece of land, and a dozen other kinds of payment were to be made. Personal abuse was, it is true, no part of the lot of the mediæval serf. "Gurth the swine-herd," with the iron collar around his neck, is a character quite unknown to real history. The *jus primæ noctis* is in all probability a myth. The picture of the villain driven to the fields by his master's whip, subject to maltreatment, beaten and insulted, marked out by his costume and bearing from the free man, is quite a false notion. A villain with a larger amount of land might be much better off, for a long period at least, than a free man with a smaller holding. A free new-comer to the village, paying a high rent for two or three acres of the demesne, might look with envy on the old-established customary tenant, serf though the latter was. The great weakness of the villain's position was his inability to improve his condition, while the free man might do so. And after all, mere liberty, the sense of freedom, counts for something; and the customary tenant was not, and realized that he was not, free, and, as we know from direct testimony, suffered under that realization. In 1381, when these peasants had risen in rebellion and were marching on London, one of their demands was "that we be no more called serfs forever."

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Villains as the bulk of the population were, in a certain sense each village or manor was a little self-governing community. Their life was so much centred within itself, there was so little interference from the outside, that they seemed to be left to settle their own affairs in much their own way, or at least in such a way as could be reached by compromise between the people and the lord of the manor. The little assembly in which this local self-government was carried on was known as the manor court. It met usually on one day in every three weeks. All the tenants were bound to attend,—at least all the men and such of the women as were landholders or were specially summoned. The meeting was as apt to be on Sunday as on any other day. The idea that the whole of Sunday should be kept for strictly sacred uses seems to have been unknown in the Middle Ages. Sunday was often appointed for the opening day of Parliament, for sittings of the King's courts, for the gathering for a military campaign. The objections to its use for such purposes arose at a later date.

But there was really no rule as to the day of the manor court meetings. Their frequency, their dates, and probably their constitution, differed from manor to manor, depending, like everything else, on custom only. Careful records were kept by the steward or his clerk of

the proceedings of the meetings; and in the manuscript-rooms of old manor-houses and castles, of cathedrals and colleges, and among the national archives great masses, literally cords, of parchments covered with these records still remain. From the manor-court rolls thus preserved we learn most of what we know about the ordinary daily life of the villagers of the Middle Ages.

And as we obtain occasional glimpses of their personality and character there is a refreshing sense of reality, of naturalness, about what we can spell out from the somewhat dubious Latin and the contracted writing of the rolls: the names are well-known English names, the offences they committed are common and comprehensible ones, the complaints and disputes bear testimony to the same unregenerate human nature;—and yet back of it all is the subtle suggestiveness of the communal life of the village group, of its isolation from the rest of the world, of the servile status of many of its members, all of which go to make up the great chasm between the Middle Ages and modern times.

Of the actual procedure of the meetings we only know that they were generally held in the hall of the manor house, though there are indications of meetings being held under some spreading tree on the village green, or even on some open hill-side or other popular gathering place. The lord or his steward presided and exercised considerable authority. Complaints were made and answered by the attendants themselves without intervention of lawyers or attorneys. If juries were wanted, they were made up on the spot, often from freemen and villains together. Transfers of land by inheritance, sale, or lease were reported and recorded; disputes as to the right to the possession of land or about debts or other matters were settled, and decisions given by those who were present or by the presiding officer.

But the largest part of the work of the meetings was the punishment for offences. All sorts of misdemeanors are punished by all sorts of penalties, from a fine of a half-penny to hanging; and these are all recorded with extreme minuteness. Alan the reaper is fined six pence for the trespass of his colt; Eve of the corner the same amount for the trespass of her pigs upon the lord's land; William Ash the same for intrusion upon the corn. At Weedon Beek in 1290 Robert at Hull is fined a shilling "because he cut down and sold trees which he had no right to sell." Complaints of slander are being constantly made. At Ogbourne in 1249 Nicholas Siward is fined six pence for making a false complaint against William Pafey, and the latter is fined a shilling for entering into a fight with the former for doing so. At Brightwaltham in 1290 Robert Cute raised the hue-and-cry against Thomas Bagge for committing an assault upon him. The matter was investigated, and it was found that the two men had been disputing and the latter had simply pushed the former off from a log on which both

had been standing. They were therefore both fined, Thomas for his petty assault, Robert for raising the hue-and-cry for a trifle. At the same meeting a somewhat similar case had to be settled. John Parlefrens had discovered Agnes Edrian at night standing on a wall spying out what he was doing in his own house. He thereupon laid violent hands upon her and, as the record declares, "was insulted by her with contumelious words." Each of them thereupon made complaint against the other in the court. Innumerable fines testify to the conviction of the villagers for offences against the lord of the manor. At Deverill in 1247 the parson is fined for having let his cow wander into the lord's meadow. William Cob, William Coke, and Walter Dogskin had to pay two shillings because they guarded the seven pigs of Robert Gentil so badly as to allow them to injure the lord's growing wheat. But many of these payments made to the lord are rather the enforcement of seignorial rights than fines properly so called. Baldwin the cobbler's son at Tooting in Surrey gives pledges that during his stay at London he will make no claim to liberty contrary to the will of the lord, and will return whenever the lord wishes. Agnes Stampelove gives the lord two shillings for the privilege of coming and going in the manor and yet of living outside of it. A touch of sympathetic interest is found at Launton in 1333, where it is recorded that "Agnes Valner, a serf, gives to her lord a fine of six pence that she may be allowed to serve and marry wheresoever and whensoever she pleases, and she pays no more of a fine because she is poor and an orphan." In 1275 at Cottesford Isabella Warren pays to the lord four shillings for the privilege of giving her daughter Mary in marriage.

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Thus the villagers pass before us in all the common events of life. They live in the manor court records with their own personal names and often with their personal characteristics. Their names are but slightly different from what we are used to in later times. Judging from the chance indications, the favorite women's names in the thirteenth century were Alice, Agnes, and Matilda. There is scarcely a village where these do not appear repeatedly. Some of the most familiar names in modern times, however, seem to have been but little used. Out of one hundred women who were so unfortunate as to be mentioned in the rolls for one reason or another, and whose names have been counted, but two had our favorite and beautiful name of Mary, and there was but one Margaret. On the other hand, Isabella, Juliana, Cecilia, and Petronilla seem rather high-sounding for mediæval peasants, but they were common enough. There is an occasional euphonious and not infrequent Muriel or Avice; and Botild, Alvena, Estrild, Edith, and the like testify to the old Saxon origin.

Of men's names the most common, as might be expected, are such as Richard, William, and Walter. But some were very prevalent which have become unusual, as Gilbert, Roger, Geoffrey, Alan, and Ralph.

Bible names and those of saints are, curiously enough, in those religious times, quite unusual. Even those which do occur suggest the Old Testament rather than the new. There is only an occasional Adam or Elias, a Sara or Susanna, to represent this class. A certain "Noah pinguis" ("fat Noah"), however, plays an active part for a long time in the affairs of Weedon Beck in Northamptonshire. The names of the abstract virtues, Prudence, Grace, and such like, were, of course, far ahead in the Puritan imagination of the seventeenth century.

Last names in the thirteenth century are in an interesting transitional stage, sometimes being dispensed with altogether, sometimes evidently descriptive of the individual, and in still others apparently already recognized as hereditary family possessions. "Hugh the son of Andrew," "William, Roger's son," "Agnes, Jor's daughter," are types of simple patronymic which extend all the way up through society from these villains to "Edward the King, son of Edward the King." Some last names are, of course, already long established family names; but most of them are descriptive either of some peculiarity of the person, of the locality to which he belonged, or of his occupation. Instances of the first kind, that is, of personal peculiarities, are numerous; William the Big, Robert Redhead, and William Blackbeard seem to defy the Latin of the clerk, and appear in their English form in the midst of the Latin record. Walterus Senex very properly served on a jury to give testimony as to the ancient customs of the manor. Simon le Juvenis also served, though his testimony should by rights have been much less valuable. Johannes Bras-de-fer sounds rather pretentious for a man who was evidently a serf of Ruislip in 1248. Then we find Walter of the Green, Hugh of the Tree, John by the South Wood, Alexander in the Lane, Wyot of the Ford, Peter of the Churchyard, Lucy of the Mill, and Eve of the Corner, who may be taken to represent the class whose names are taken from their dwelling-places.

Occupations gave their distinction to a large proportion of the people: Shepherd, Swineherd, Hayward, Reeve, Clerk, Forester, and Dyer are frequent names. The prevalence of Faber, the Latin for Smith, at this early date indicates the subsequent ubiquity of that family.

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A study of mediæval rural life as taken from these court records is apt to give the impression that the principal part of the life of the people was spent in quarrelling or in the commission or prosecution of offences. Our ancestors certainly were a very litigious and a very disorderly people. The records teem with instances of men and women

drawing knives against one another, of breaking into houses, of prosecuting one another for slander. Then we have such entries as these: "It is ordained by common consent that all the women of the village must restrain their tongues from all slander." "Thomas son of Robert Smith is fined twelve pence because his wife Agnes beat Emma the wife of Robert the Tailor; and Robert the Tailor six pence because his wife Emma swore at Agnes the wife of Thomas." "It is enjoined upon all the tenants of the village that none of them attack any others in word or deed, with clubs, or arrows, or knives, under penalty of paying forty shillings." Such entries, frequently occurring, in addition to the innumerable instances of individual attack, slander, petty theft, and other immorality, seem to show a community of far from perfect virtue. But, after all, our national histories are not very different. We treat them as a record of wars, conquests, rebellions, and depositions of rulers. And probably both pictures of the great nation and of the petty village are misleading, and both for the same reason: it is the violence that is recorded. Contests between angry peasants and angry nations are the salient points which obtain contemporary mention. The quieter annals of normal every-day life remained unrecorded.

We can perhaps now sketch in the main outlines at least of the picture of the old village life, the life of four-fifths of all Englishmen in the Middle Ages. We can imagine the villagers, in the early morning, emerging from their mud-floored, thatch-roofed cottages and scattering outward to the open fields surrounding the village. There, in "a fair field full of folk," as *Piers Plowman* describes it, the reeve puts some to work at the great plough, sets others to weeding or breaking clods or clearing out ditches; or a little later in the year to mowing the meadows or harvesting the grain; or those who are fortunate enough to have fulfilled the compulsory number of days' work for the lord for the week go off to some one or other of their scattered strips to work at their own crops.

Or we may see them gathered in the manor court, disputing over some conflicting claim, or agreeing to some statement of customary rights or payments, or forming a crude jury to decide a question of law or of fact; or perhaps only listening to the heavy orders of the lord's steward enjoining upon them some ordinance or imposing a fine for a general neglect of duty.

Or again we may watch them gathering in the parish church on the morning of Sunday or some holy day, or if it is in the afternoon they may be shooting at the butts with the long-bow. At some time the villagers must have developed this new weapon and practised with it to some purpose, for when the war with France broke out, and volunteers at the king's wages were called for, the yeomen came armed with such a weapon and so skilled in its use that they were constant victors

against overwhelming odds. They proved, as their remote descendants on another continent and with a very different weapon have proved, that precision of aim, rapidity of firing, and national vigor are irresistible. The long-bow was, from the thirteenth century onward, the customary weapon of the English lower classes.

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It is curious how often in the old rural life this formula, of that which is customary, confronts us.

All things were regulated by custom. The "custom of the manor" is the power to which all alike bow. It decides the rules of inheritance, the methods of agriculture, the classification of each acre of land, whether demesne, freehold, or villain land; the status of each person, whether free or serf; the labor and the rent which each must perform or pay; the duties, rights, and privileges which appertain to each person on the manor, lord, freeman, or villain. That a thing was customary was a full and sufficient answer, reason, or defence for any matter in question. The "custom of the manor" was the law and the constitution on which the community rested.

Or perhaps we may imagine the villagers in the church-yard, that general meeting-place, listening to the sermon of a wandering friar, or, quite as likely, watching the antics of some travelling mountebank or of a trained bear and his keeper.

And perhaps in the church-yard is the best place to leave them, for that is where they will all be gathered at last. Even here the characteristic principles of the mediæval village, communalism and custom, were still dominant, for the villagers were all buried in the common sacred soil and with the customary sacred rites.

Nothing strikes one more in endeavoring to follow the career of these peasants than the similarity of their lives to one another.

"Fifteen other villains who do in all things like the same William," was quoted a few pages back from an old list of tenants and their services. And it very fairly expressed their fate. They were born, lived, and died within the limits of the same village, they labored within the same fields, planted and harvested the same crops, were christened, married, shriven, and from Sunday to Sunday worshipped in the same church; and finally were all gathered together in the same grave-yard. It was a laborious life that they had lived, a hard life, a life that suffered much from privation, from frequent famine, and from occasional pestilence; and in many ways it was a most narrow and monotonous life. But, after all, in many ways also it was a secure life, protected as well as handicapped by its worship of custom, and more freed from the constant stress of competition and the antagonism of man to man than life in some more modern and in other ways happier times.

TWO LONDON LYRICS

By I. Zangwill

I.

AT THE ZOO

THE sky is gray with rain that will not fall,
The clayey paths are oozing ghostly mist.
Reeking with sadness immemorial,
The gray earth saps the courage to exist.

Poor tropic creatures, penned in northern land,
I, too, desire the sun and am a slave.
My heart is with you, and I understand
The lion turning in his living grave.



II.

STREET WANDERERS

DEAR child, as mid the crowd we stand,
Where noisy barrows shine,
I love to feel your little hand
Slip gently into mine.

Then of a sudden to recall,
As though I saw a star,
What is, dear child, the best of all,
That you a woman are.

THE INDEPENDENCE OF SILAS BOLLENDER

By Paul Laurence Dunbar

Author of "The Sport of the Gods," "The Uncalled," etc.



SECOND IN THE SERIES OF OHIO PASTORALS

THE annual fair was on in the town which was the seat of Montgomery County, and the expectations of those who farmed and of those who toiled otherwise were raised to the highest pitch. It was still early enough in the life of the State of Ohio for such an affair to be the prime attraction of the season. Even the metropolis of the State, which took great airs upon itself and was spoken of in all the provincial districts as "the city," did not deem it beneath her dignity to hold such a fête.

It was the great gathering-place of the toilers of the section, who now found leisure for a little rest and sport. Sometimes it came too near on harvest time. And then what struggling there was! What knitting of sweaty brows and doing of double stints! For this fair, this thing of puppet shows, prize vegetables, and cattle, this carnival of cider-drinking, dancing, and horse-racing, was a matter not to be missed for the lack of a hand, or, at most, a few hours' overwork.

The first days of the fair were not so popular, as it was generally supposed that then all the attractions were not in, but yet coming; so, as the new Ohioan, informed with the spirit of his Yankee progenitors, wanted the fullest for his money, he came on the third or the fourth day. Usually it was the fourth, for the shrewd country people knew that some who must visit other places would leave Friday anyway, and they wanted all—all. Knowing this, the authorities of the Fair Association redoubled their efforts on those days, as did the cheap showmen and fakirs. Accordingly, on Wednesday and Thursday the races were more and better; the music finer; the wheel-of-fortune buzzed constantly and merrily; the cheap jacks shouted more engagingly, and wherever one turned, he might see for himself and the price of admission that wonder of the sea, a mermaid,—a mermaid in rain-water in a glass box. But they paid their money, gaped in wonder, and went their ways, convinced that now they knew more than ever of the world's mysteries.

It was with no care for the loud-mouthed fakirs nor the deep-sea

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wonders that the now happy benedict, Nathan Foster, made up his mind to go. Contrary to custom, which Nathan, however, cared little about, he decided to go on Monday, and for once, without considering the morality of his action, he went over to discuss the matter with Silas Bollender.

"Wouldn't go a Monday, 'f I's you, Nathan," said Silas; "they ain't never much goin' on then. You see, folks air jest gittin' in an' settin' things to rights."

"I do' know, Silas," replied Nathan, rubbing his chin reflectively. "I 'low I'll go a Monday, an' I got jest three reasons fur it. Fust an' foremost, 'f they advertise the fair to begin on a Monday, 'pears like, somehow er other, it ought to begin; then I got a lot o' work on hand, so I want to git the journey over an' done with; an' last, I hear tell down to Lem Baker's store that a whole passel o' people passed through Enon last Saturday with their stock and their patent machines all on the way to the fair. So I 'low I won't be disapp'inted,—leastways, not much."

"Well, there ain't no use talkin' to you. Ef you're sot to go, of course, you're sot."

"Better come along with me; 'pears like there's goin' to be a powerful sight o' interestin' things there."

"Do' know ef I'll get there, Nathan, but ef I do, it won't be 'fore about Thursday—that's the big day."

"I'd be glad of your company," said Nathan a bit forlornly, for he was by nature sociable, and hated the ordeal of travelling alone.

"The widder—Mis' Foster's—a-goin' with you, ain't she?"

"No, she 'lows she'd better stay home an' take keer o' the house."

"You don't say you're a-goin' alone?"

"I jest am."

"Nathan Foster, I 'low I had about ez much to do with you marryin' ez anybody."

"Well, Silas, they ain't no disputin' you had ez much to do with it ez anybody, essept Providence, an' I hain't never forgot to give you yore share o' the praise."

"I don't want no praise, Nathan, not a bit, but all I got to say to you is that you're a mighty lucky man." Just then he heard his wife's voice calling him, as usual, and he went away shaking his head and repeating, "Yes, you're a mighty lucky man."

So on the next day Nathan went to the fair, and through the long hours walked about enjoying the sights. He knew what he had gone to see, and nothing else tempted him, not even the glittering wheel and its promise of sudden fortune. He heard from the distance the thud of the horses' hoofs and the shouts of a scanty first day's crowd, but the races had no charm for him. He was perfectly happy as he walked

about among the vegetables, cattle, and farming machines, now and then taking a "snack" from the generous lunch which his thrifty wife had put up for him. Night found him on his way home, weary but joyful, and bubbling over with the news of the great things he had seen. It was too late to see Silas that night, so he bided his time till the morrow, and meanwhile regaled Lizzie with tales of his experiences.

Silas was as anxious to hear of his neighbor's exploits in the city as Nathan was to tell them, so it was not to be wondered at that both men found work to do early the next morning near the fence which separated their land. They were both properly diligent for awhile, and then Silas leaned on the handle of the hoe, with which he had been making feints at the ground, and grinned across, "Well, you went to the fair, did you, Nathan?"

Nathan straightened up and answered gleefully, "Well, I jest did."

"An' what fur time did you have?"

"You ain't no idee, Silas Bollender; it was jest plum bully. Why, there was one hog there that it was wo'th goin' any kind o' distance to see. Actually, man, you never see such a animal in all yore life. He were that fat that it looked 'like the sun would jest render him, an' turn him out lard then and there."

"He must 'a' been a wonderful beast," assented the listener.

"Silas, it does seem almost onreligious to call that animal a beast, he was so well appearin'. It's a fact. Why, man, he took two premiums, a blue and a red."

"Pshaw!"

"Yes, indeed, an' he looked jest ez proud ez his owner. But let me tell you about the steers an' the cows an'—oh, yes, them great big punkins." And so Nathan rambled on to his friend's delight until Silas was wild to see the sights for himself, and vowed then and there that he would go too, and alone.

"You went alone," he told Nathan, "an' I'm jest goin' to make my Mollie follow Mis' Foster's example. An' say, Nathan," he added silyly, "I reckon you didn't see none o' the shows ner the hoss-racin' ner nothin'?"

"Silas Bollender, I don't 'low I have to furgit my Christian duty jest because I go to a fair."

"Oh, no offence, Nathan, no offence; I was jest a-jokin'."

"An' I do say," Nathan went on indomitably, "that ef it's them things you're a-goin' to the fair fur, you'd better take yore wife along er stay at home, fur there's many a snare there fur the wicked an' onwary."

"Don't you mind me, Nathan, I kin take keer o' myself ef I go."

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"'Let him that thinketh he stand take heed lest he fall,'" was the solemn reply.

"Ah, Nathan, I ain't allus a-goin' on like you, mortifyin' my flesh."

"Well, well, Silas, go yore way, but ricollect that many a man who won't learn to mortify his flesh, ends up by mortifying his flesh and blood."

But Silas was determined, and went away laughing to announce his intention to Mollie, his wife. But the laugh seemed to die away as he came before his wife's stern visage, where she was bustling about the kitchen.

"I see you an' Nathan Foster a-hobnobbin' ez ushul over the fence. I do wonder what you two men find to be talkin' about so much. You're worse than a pair o' ol' grannies, I do declare."

Silas raised his eyes to the level of his wife's waist-band. He dared not meet her gaze as he replied, "Nathan was a-tellin' me about the fair. He went yistiddy."

"Humph, ef he did, I 'low he had more time than his wife had fur sich foolishness."

"Tain't foolishness," retorted Silas with some show of boldness, "it's instruction."

"Instruction, fiddlesticks! Silas Bollender, you'd better be out instructin' some o' the work there is to do about this place, instead o' standin' here a-talkin' idleness with me."

"Idleness er no idleness, I'm a-goin' to that fair Thursday!"

"You're a-goin' to that fair? You go to a fair! I kin say fur Nathan Foster that he kin take keer of hisself most anywhere. But you, why, you ain't got the gumption of a three-year-old baby. You go to a fair! Why, like ez not I'd have you back on my hands robbed, an' mebbe murdered. You'd run into everything you see. Now, all I got to say is, you go ef you want to; but I don't take no responsibility of it. I wash my hands of the whole thing."

Silas was wofully abashed, but he managed to say, "I do' want you to take no responsibility. I'm tired o' bein' tied to yore aporn-strings, an' I'm goin' to be independent fur once."

Mollie Bollender, quite contrary to her custom, closed her lips in a stony silence. This revolt of her husband's against her ever-undisputed control was too much for words. Silas hurried away to the barn. He felt his triumph, and it was sweet to his soul, but he had his misgivings. As soon as he could do so properly, he saw Nathan, and told him slily, "The ol' lady got on her high hoss when I told her I was goin'."

But some of the joy of conquering was taken out of him as Nathan replied with shaking head, "I don't know what's goin' to come of it all. I don't know what's goin' to come of it."

"Pleg gone it, Nathan," exclaimed Silas, "you talk like I didn't have no sense, an' jest ez ef I was a-goin' out robbin' instead o' to the fair. You do' know what's goin' to come of it? Why, nothin' didn't come o' yore goin'. You put me jest in mind o' Mollie," and then Silas's naturally humorous disposition triumphed, and he laughed in spite of himself. "Blessed ef I don't b'lieve you an' her air some kin to one another."

But Nathan did not laugh, he only said, "You got a mighty fur-seein' wife, Silas; you ought to consider her a blessin'."

"I do, Nathan, I do, but I must say that sometimes the Lord does disguise His blessin's most wonderful."

"Silas, that's open disrespect to yore wife."

"Then Lord furgive me, fur I don't mean it," said the other seriously, "fur she's a good wife to me. But sometimes—sometimes there ain't no doubtin' that she's a little bit over-keer-takin'," and something suspiciously like a twinkle returned to his eye.

Nothing is worse for a man or boy who sets out either on a journey or in life under the prediction that he must turn out badly. Usually he is very likely to fulfil the prophecy out of pure discouragement. Sometimes he does not, but, nevertheless, his position is all the worse for him. Under such a cloud as this it was that on Thursday morning, dressed in his stiffest and most uncomfortable clothes, Silas set off for the fair.

There was a sheepish look upon his face, for he knew that he was a culprit already condemned, and felt no confidence in himself. A bad boy playing truant could not have gone forth more guiltily than he. Even the people whom he met on the road seemed to know that his was a forbidden holiday and to look at him askance.

But when he reached the city where the fair was going on something of the same truant boy in his nature took possession of him, and, giving himself up, he entered heart and soul into the pleasures of the festival. Many tales were told about him after Silas's return home. But the first thing he did, and this upon no less authority than Abram Judkins himself, was to take a ride upon the Flying Dutchman.

"Yes, sir," said Judkins afterwards, "the fust thing I see of Brother Silas, he was a-settin' on one o' them prancin' hosses, with a paper o' gingerbread in one hand, an' with the other a-hol'n' to his steed fur dear life. At fust I thinks to myself, the man's took leave of his senses, an' then I see him git off ez peart ez anybody, until he takes a step er two, an' then here he goes fust this way an' then that. 'Is Brother Silas under the influence?' says I to myself; but purty soon, I'm happy to say, I sees sich is not the case, fur he soon recovered hisself, an' I see it was the motion of that onrightheous machine. 'Anyhow,' says I, 'this man is shorely took peculiar.'"

It was all true. Silas had forgotten himself. It is possible that he did go for instruction, that he wanted to know more of short-horn cattle, draft horses, and the methods of fattening hogs. It is barely possible that he wanted to see the wonderful corn and the enormous pumpkins of which Nathan had told him, but the truant in him had got the better of the investigator, and he had fallen by the wayside.

It may be that all the years of hard work and repression, the restraint, first, of a plodding boyhood, and then of a narrow married life, had slipped off his shoulders as the miles had rolled away between him and his home, and he had found for the first time what freedom meant. Anyway, he enjoyed himself. He ate gingerbread, rode the merry-go-round, and someone even saw him coming out of one of the many minstrel shows with a seraphic smile on his face.

It was at the track-side, whither Silas had strayed, perhaps innocently, but now guiltily remained, that the catastrophe happened. There was a great crowd, a great excitement, when in the crush he felt someone tug at his chain. He put his hand hastily at his side. His watch was gone. He saw a man hastening away and rushed after him, crying "Stop thief!" Somebody tripped him up, and when he got to his feet the thief was gone.

There were tears of shame and grief in his eyes as he looked at the smiling crowd. Then he turned and blundered his way out from among them, bruised in mind and sore from his fall. He would go home, he told himself, and never leave it again. Mollie was right, after all. Bless her! How he'd like to be there in the kitchen with her right then. He'd take her a present back; yes, he would. He put his hand into his pocket for his wallet. It was gone. A sickness came over him, and he staggered as if he had been struck. That wallet had six dollars in it.

Fearfully and tremblingly he took off his hat, in the sweat-band of which his return-ticket had been placed. Thank Heaven! it was safe, and with a gladder heart than a piece of pasteboard had ever before inspired he went to his train.

They were mingled thoughts which passed through poor Silas's mind as he neared home, all his money gone, and his watch, an old timepiece that had come down from his father. He lingered around until it was quite late before he ventured to go into his house. Mollie was sitting up for him.

"Well, Silas?" she said.

"It was a great fair," he said sheepishly.

"Hum—you're late enough. I'm su'prised to see you get home alive. What time is it?"

There it was. The blow had come without any warning, and with no chance for him to work up to it.

With grim horror Mollie heard through the recital of his woes, and then she sat looking at him like an avenging Fate.

"There, what did I say? Yore watch, an' six dollars in money!"

"You're right, Mollie, you're allus right."

"I 'low you'll listen to me next time, an' not go junketin' around fur all the world like a idiot."

"I'll allus listen to you after this," he said humbly.

"You'd better, instead o' runnin' around after hoss-racin' an' sich like, an' losin' yore children's substance. Oh, what a woman does have to bear in this world!"

"Don't, Mollie, don't feel bad about it. I——" He broke down and hid his eyes on his arm, like a child.

Something soft came into Mrs. Bollender's own eyes, but she tried to disguise it in her voice as she said, "Go to bed, Silas, I'm shore it's time."

"Yes, Mollie."

"An' don't you dare run over an' tell Nathan Foster about yore capers. It's enough fur me to know."

So it is that only the merry-go-round riding and show-going of Silas are known to his friends thereabouts until to-day. And all that Nathan Foster could say next day was, "Well, Silas, it's a mercy you're back all right; you never did take things serious enough."

Anyway, Mollie Bollender was loyal.



THE HAPPY ISLES

BY EBEN E. REXFORD

WHERE are the Happy Isles we dream about,
 Bright with the beauty of unfading flowers,
 And lulled in peace through the long summer hours,
 Where no one knows a sorrow or a doubt?
 Sometimes, when winds of fancy blow away
 The mists that gather on the gray world's rim,
 I catch brief glimpses, mystically dim,
 Of lovely shores, fair with perpetual May,
 And hills that bask in sunshine all day long,
 And hear, across the leagues that lie between,—
 The long, long leagues that always intervene,—
 Strange singing, with no minor in the song.

And then—the vision fades—the music dies,—
 But I have had my glimpse of Paradise!

IN A SECOND-HAND SHOP

By Dr. Charles C. Abbott



I RECENTLY spent a pleasant half-day in town. It was thiswise. Above the door of an old house facing on a back street was a dingy sign with the words, "Second-Hand Shop," and, as I was about to pass, I noticed at the entrance an old man whose physique and clothing admirably conformed with the surroundings. He was, to my mind, a second-hand man,—as if some wandering consciousness of Colonial days had retenanted a lifeless hulk.

I entered the shop with the confidence of one sure of a welcome, but was quickly disabused. Between petulant puffs of tobacco-smoke I heard the mumbled question, "What do you want?"

"To look around," I replied.

"If you know what you want, I can tell you if I've got it," the old man muttered between puffs of greater volume, and then I heard something like, "rummage—things broken."

Certainly, the welcome I anticipated had not materialized. I hesitated a moment, and then, disliking to be rebuffed, took a forward step, saying "Old furniture" as I did so.

"Parlor, bed-room, or kitchen?" he asked, half-hiding himself in a cloud of ill-smelling smoke.

"Parlor or bed-room," I replied.

"Back room," said the old man, pointing with his pipe to the rear of the shop.

I started in that direction, but was stayed by a pile of old books. There is no bait like this, and I always nibble, sometimes bite, and generally am caught.

"Not furniture," the old man growled.

"Books furnish the mind," I remarked, looking up.

The old man grunted, and glared at me in a way that I did not like, but I moved on, as he wished. A few steps brought me to a table covered with a cluttered heap of odds and ends, and here I resolutely took my stand.

"Trifles," muttered the old man impatiently.

"But I want to look them over," I protested, and stood my ground.

"Tabitha!" the old man called in an imperative way.

Tabitha ascended or descended, I could not tell which, so sudden was her appearance.

"Attend to this customer," the old man said with a most uncomplimentary sneer, and turned away.

"See anything you want?" Tabitha asked.

"When I do, I will say so," I replied, adopting her curt manner. Tabitha sniffed.

"Do you treat all your customers in this way?" I asked.

Tabitha looked older and uglier than before, and turned as if to call her husband, but as promptly changed her mind.

When I picked up a trifle from the table and asked, as if nothing had happened, "What's that?"

"To give castor-oil to children," she replied.

It was a shoe-shaped pewter box, with a lid, and hole in the toe. I remembered my oleaginous doses of other days, and, shuddering, pointed to a more cheerful object.

"How much for this snuffer-tray?" I asked.

"Half a dollar."

"Those spectacles?" pointing to a pair of enormous frames with one circular green glass.

"Half a dollar."

"Too much," I said, as snappy as her snarls; "and that candle-stick?"

"Dollar."

"Phew! you're high-priced," I exclaimed in mock despair.

"Just what I thought," snarled Tabitha. "You don't want anything."

"Not at such prices," I replied.

"What I thought," Tabitha muttered.

"Do you buy old things?" I asked, a sudden thought striking me. "Sometimes."

"Well, why don't you go to the old Pinhorne house and buy all they've got. The old lady's dead, and the daughter says she's not going to take the things all the way to Oregon, where her cousin lives. Lots of old things in good condition."

Some of Tabitha's angles were relaxed to curves. Trifling evidences of average humanity began to appear.

"The andirons are good," I continued with increased enthusiasm, "the candle-sticks without a dent, splendid pewter dishes and mugs, old maple secretary, hall clock, and bedsteads with curtains all round. It's like going into a house two hundred years ago."

Tabitha's reduction of angles progressed, and, picking up the snuffer-tray, she said, "You can have it for a quarter."

"Thanks, I'll take it," I replied, and continued: "There's no knowing what is in the garret and cellar of that queer old house. You know the Pinhornes came to this country among the first, and some

of them always lived there. Miss Angelina is the last of them round here, and it's your chance."

Tabitha's skinny palms met and she thoughtfully looked up at the ceiling, and then, returning to the business of the moment, she picked up castor-oil box, spectacles, and candle-stick and said, almost smilingly, "The four for a dollar."

"Thanks; please tie them up in one bundle," and while she was thus engaged I studied very hard what next to say; but all came to me in time.

"There's a room over the wagon-house they always kept locked, and it's full of things they had no use for. One real old desk is full of papers," and here, having handed over my dollar, I slowly moved towards the street.

I saw she was about to ask a question or two, but I anticipated her.

"I don't know whether or not she will keep the silver, but she has a splendid urn and such odd shapes of spoons; and then there's a real India china blue-and-white soup-tureen with boars' heads for handles. Keep a good lookout for that."

Tightly clutching my four-fold purchase, I finally reached the old shop's front door, and not till then did I give Tabitha time to speak.

"Where did you say the Pinhorne place was?" she eagerly asked, her face beaming with pleasant anticipation.

"I did not say," I replied calmly. "I do not know. Do you?" and then how I hurried away!

When I ventured to look back there was a great cloud of smoke coming out of the door, and when it rolled away I saw the old man, with one hand shading his eyes, looking in my direction.



SERIATIM

BY MARGUERITE MERINGTON

THE latest woman laughed to the rose,
 "What reck I of his past!
 Hitherto blown as the light wind blows,
 Forever I hold him fast!
 Alone and forever I hold him, Rose;
 For I am the last—the last!"

When summer hung, at the chapter's close,
 Her crimson flags half-mast,
 A woman wept over a dear, dead rose,
 "I, too, am his past—his past!"

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

The Last Rebel. By Joseph A. Altsheier. The idea of "The Last Rebel" is curiously pathetic: a wandering hunter falls into the hands of an ex-soldier of the Confederacy, still (thirty years after the late unpleasantness) holding his post for the cause, which he by no means considers lost. The inherent chivalry of the best of our brothers in gray is well portrayed by the author. Incidentally there is a love-story, of course,—what tale is complete without it?—but the main interest centres in the white-haired Colonel Hetherill and his small band of enthusiasts. The scene is indicated thus: "Take down the map of Kentucky, and you will see in the east a vast region, roughened over with dark scrawls meaning mountains through which no railroad comes, and few roads of any kind either. Add to it other large and similar portions of the map contiguous in Virginia, West Virginia, and Tennessee, and you have enough country to make a brave kingdom. . . . In this kingdom of mountain and wilderness I was lost. . . ."

Though ordinary war-stories come and go, those by Mr. Altsheier retain a hold upon the reading public, surviving that apathy which, inevitably following the first blush of popularity, is so often fatal to a new book. So it was with "A Knight of Philadelphia" and "The Sun of Saratoga," former novels from Mr. Altsheier's pen; and so it is with "The Last Rebel," the renewed demand for which has induced the publishers (J. B. Lippincott Company) to issue it as the current number of their excellent *Select Novels*. In paper and cloth bindings.

Poetical Quotations.
Prose Quotations.
By S. Austin Allibone, LL.D. Two Volumes. New Edition.

While working upon his "Dictionary of Authors," the late Dr. Allibone conceived the plan of supplementing that work—all unfinished as it was—by a copious selection of quotations from some of the works of the authors recorded in that register. The "Dictionary of Authors" completed,—a task sufficiently extensive for any one lifetime, one would think,—Dr. Allibone courageously began his twin volumes of Quotations, and labored to such good purpose that the "Poetical Quotations" soon issued from the press, and was followed in about two years by "Prose Quotations,"—the three Dictionaries—Authors, Poetry, Prose—representing and partly constituting a literature marvellous for its extent, variety, and value," as the compiler himself phrased it.

That Dr. Allibone did not overestimate the importance and value of his series of works is sufficiently evidenced by the fact that they have been in use by readers ever since their first publication, and have been so far recognized as standards and unapproachable that not only has no other Dictionary of Authors ever been issued, but none of the books of quotations that have appeared from time to time has ever seriously competed with the corresponding volumes of the Allibone series.

"Out of monuments, names, wordes, proverbs, traditions, private recordes, and evidences, fragments of stories, passages of bookes, and the like, we doe save and recover somewhat from the deluge of time," he quotes, from Lord Bacon's "Advancement of Learning,"—a most befitting characterization of his works, which "save and recover somewhat from the deluge of time" by over twenty-two thousand quotations long and short, ranging from Socrates to

Tennyson, a period of nearly twenty-five centuries, or practically the whole life of the world as we know it.

The present edition is issued from the Lippincott Press (through which agency all Dr. Allibone's works reached the world) in a new dress which has rendered feasible the reduction of the price to a figure within the reach of all buyers of books.

Tables for the Determination of Minerals. By Persifor Frazer. Fifth Edition.

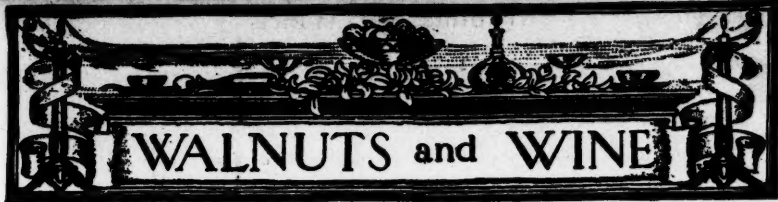
In the *fifth edition* of Dr. Persifor Frazer's "Mineral Tables" we have this valuable book brought thoroughly up to the date of publication, with such additions and emendations as have been necessitated by the mineralogical progress of the last years of the nineteenth century, and in its present form, as in the past, it is the indispensable companion of the geologist and mineralogist.

Nor is such a book of service to the student or professional mineralogist alone. In fact, as Dr. Frazer states in his preface, "There are three applications for which these tables were more particularly designed: . . . and third, they may prove serviceable to him who, though neither geologist nor mineralogist, is impelled by business or love of nature to collect minerals." To such a one the plan of the book—which is based upon the course of practical instruction pursued in the Royal Saxon Mining Academy, in Freiberg—will appeal by its readiness of reference both at home and—since it is small enough to slip easily into the pocket—in the field. By the observation of prominent characteristics,—lustre, color, color of streak, hardness, crystalline structure, etc.,—a bit of mineral picked up in the course of a walk is assigned with at least approximate accuracy to its proper place in the scheme of things, and for such observation a knife, a magnifying-glass, a file, and a streak tablet suffice; while in cases of doubt, subsequent tests before the blow-pipe or in the test-tube confirm or amend the decision made in the field. From the Lippincott Press.

Hints on Steam-Engine Design and Construction. By Charles Hurst. Illustrated.

Having in mind particularly the needs of junior students and engineers, Mr. Hurst has produced "a book dealing with a few every-day questions in an engineer's business relative to matters which, though trivial and obvious when spoken of, have been, nevertheless, too often ignored."

Commencing with the steam-pipes and the other portions of the circulatory apparatus, he carries the student on to a consideration of the numerous parts of the engine, finishing up with a chapter on Miscellaneous Details. The general atmosphere of the book (J. B. Lippincott Company) is that of strong common sense, which the author insists to be the most valuable quality for the young engineer. "After that he should be endowed with imagination. Common sense will guide him to the best methods of attaining his ideal. It will decide the proportion and form of each detail, and teach him to reject what is poor and weak in form and unpleasing in appearance. His imagination enables him rapidly to conceive contrivances, and invent methods for overcoming difficulties. . . . If he combines with these qualities a fair proportion of industry, it will go hard with him indeed if he does not meet with his just reward, not the least part of which is the reflection that he has produced a machine or structure that not only does all it was intended to perform, but is, at the same time, presentable in appearance."



THE persons who make the most fuss about hay-fever are those who live in clover.

A Question
Answered

GENERAL SHERMAN was one of the most approachable men who ever commanded a great army. During his famous "March to the Sea" both North and South were completely mystified as to what point he was striking for, and one day an old Georgia planter who had called at his head-quarters and enjoyed his good cheer asked him plumply if he had any objection to telling where his army was bound.

"Not the least," said Sherman. Then, leaning over, he whispered in his guest's ear, but so loudly that everybody else in the tent overheard it, "We are going pretty much where we damn please!"

O. McI.

THE PRIZE-WINNER

By Edwin L. Sabin

THE county fair is over, an' I 'spec' we'll settle down
To tight'nin' up for winter, an' to weekly trips to town.
We're keepin' purty quiet, sense it 'pears from *this* year's fair
We ain't got *many* premiums to brag on, I declare!
An' pa an' ma's disgusted,—but there's no one they can blame,
An' 'specially the jedges, who each year are jes' the same;
An' what I mean when I let on I carried off a prize
I reckon only two of us has got the leas' surmise.

Luke Barlow euchred us on hogs—pa says you bet your life
He ought to, at the rate he stuffs *them* full an' starves his wife!
An' Jerry Blossom's Cuckoo took the runnin' race from Bump—
With ary decent *start*, I swan, we'd make ol' Cuckoo hump!
The Simpkins' butter scored on our'n (though our'n is gilt-edge grade)—
Ma says that their'n may *look* all right, but *she* knows how it's made!
An' fancy work—I reckon sis is feelin' kinder sore,
Because she laughs an' says that *her'n* warn't boughten at a store!

That's jes' the way it went all through. We didn't do a lick
In cattle or in punkins, or—we didn't take a trick!
Exceptin' I come out ahead, an' made a lucky strike,
An' that was in the "Beauty Show!" Well, snicker if you like,

I don't deny I'm freckled bad—an' carrot-topped—but, then,
 You hol' your hosses—this here show warn't open to the *men*!
 'Twas meant for girls; an' there they set, a-gigglin' in a row,
 An' which one was the purties' *some* people didn't know!

By jinks! the votin' said 'twas Belle—Belle Richardson! Hurray!
 But other fellers talked so fast *I* hadn't much to say
 Until that night, when we drove home. The big, round moon had riz,
 An' I jes' felt I'd plumb sure bust unless I did the biz!
 An' comin' through the holler I spoke up, an' says, says I:
 "Competin' at a 'Beauty Show' we men had oughter try."
 Says she: "But ain't you tryin'?" jes' so sassy-like, you see,
 I kissed her—an' I asked her—an' *that* prize was won by *me*!

The New Broom

MRS. DAVIS, with hair uncombed and the sleeves of her mother-hubbard rolled up to the elbow, opened the front door and sniffed the morning air of the tenement district. She looked up and down the block to see who were out ahead of her. Mrs. Kate Farrell was sitting on her front stoop with her tongue wagging and her arms akimbo, while Mrs. Dora O'Reilly and Mrs. Sarah MacAvoy leaned on the brooms, with which they made a pretence of sweeping the pavement, and listened eagerly to what Mrs. Farrell was saying. They were discussing the rumor that Mrs. Davis was two months back with her rent.

"And her old man drawin' pay regular from the shipyards," said Mrs. MacAvoy.

"Good-mornin', Mis' Davis. We was just sayin' how nice 'twas that yer husband had a stiddy job," she added, as Mrs. Davis approached.

"I knew yees was gabblin' about somebody," remarked Mrs. Davis, looking from one to the other suspiciously. But she could not long harbor dark thoughts, as she had news to tell.

"The sign t'rent is took off me house," she announced.

"Why, so 'tis! Who's movin' in?" came in a chorus.

Mrs. Skinner, who was coming towards the group from the rear of No. 911, pricked up her ears and broke into a trot.

"I ain't heard. But if it ain't nobody I take a likin' to——" and Mrs. Davis paused ominously.

It was not necessary to complete the sentence, as the neighborhood knew that no family had ever been able to stay more than their allotted three months in the little house at the rear of the one occupied by Mrs. Davis. She was fat, pugnacious, and had a flow of vituperative language that had made her the bully of the block. She was hated and feared, but no one ever opposed her more than once. It was reported that she thrashed Davis when the evenings were dull and time hung heavy on her hands.

"There's a movin'-wagon comin' up the street," said Mrs. Skinner, whose eyes were as good as her ears. The group rushed to the curbstone.

"It's comin' on this block, and there she is, settin' on the seat with the driver. Too stingy to pay car-fare, I suppose," said Mrs. MacAvoy.



MELLIN'S FOOD

"She ain't much to look at. No bigger'n a pint," sniffed Mrs. Skinner. "One o' them putty-faced women with no heart in 'em. Give me a woman with spunk, says I."

"I'll take no back talk from the likes o' her," announced Mrs. Davis, gripping her broom as if she already saw herself routing this new enemy.

"Yees all come in me back yard," said Mrs. Dora O'Reilly cordially, "and be lookin' over me fence. Yees kin see what kind o' furniture goes in."

By the time the wagon backed up to the curbstone they were stationed at excellent points of observation, while Mrs. Davis stood in her wood-shed door. The new-comer's lips came together in a thin, straight line when she saw the heads on the other side of the fence.

"Will yees look at that old scratched burrer and them pine chairs?" whispered Mrs. Kate Farrell, who owned no bureau.

"And them waxed flowers is way out o' date," giggled Mrs. Skinner. The new-comer looked out with blazing eyes and slammed her door.

"Ain't she the spiteful thing?" called Mrs. Davis. "Katie, love," as Katie came into the yard, "just take a look into the winder, and see what she's doin'."

As Katie stood on tiptoe the door flew open, and a bucket of water caught her full in the face.

"I'll thank yees to keep yer tykes t' home, an' not be spyin' on yer betters," cried a shrill voice from the door-way.

"An' little enough there is to see in that house, with never a stick of plush furniture passin' the door! The poorness of yees makes me blush for the name of the neighborhood," screamed Mrs. Davis tauntingly.

"The little there is was come by honest, which, from the looks of yees, couldn't be said o' yer own. If I'd seen ye first, I wouldn't 'a' took the house," was the quick retort.

"An' better 'twould be fer the landlord to let his house stand vacant than to fill it with fly-be-nights," cried Mrs. Davis, accepting the gage of battle.

"Yer a garrottin' harpy," screeched the new-comer, trembling with excitement.

"Oh, she called me out of me name," yelled Mrs. Davis. She grabbed her broom in rage.

"She called her out o' her name," came in tones of horror from the row along the fence.

As Mrs. Davis dashed into the yard she was met half-way by the new-comer. Both her hands also gripped a broom-handle. She was full of fight, and there was no sign of fear in the glittering little eyes that watched every move of her opponent. Mrs. Davis brought her broom well back of her head in a full-arm swing, as if she were teeing off on the golf links, but the new-comer dodged. Mrs. Davis spun like a top with the impetus of her own blow. Before she could recover herself she got a crack on the back of her head that made her see stars. A second blow landed on her broad back and knocked her breathless. The wiry little woman whom she had scorned as an antagonist dashed around her like a humming-bird, jabbing here and there, varying the attack occasionally by a smash on Mrs. Davis's head that would have caved an ordinary skull.

A few of the
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" " Bate, Tennessee
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" " Burrows, Michigan
" " Butler, North Carolina
" " Caffery, Louisiana
" " Chandler, New Hampshire
" " Clark, Wyoming
" " Clay, Georgia
" " Culberson, Texas
" " Cullom, Illinois

Countess Cassini, niece of Russian Ambassador

Mrs. (Senator) Daniel, Virginia
" " Davis, Minnesota
" " Deboe, Kentucky

Admiral George Dewey
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" (Senator) Fairbanks, Indiana
" " Foster, Washington
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" (Justice) Field
" (Senator) Gallinger, New Hampshire
" " Gear, Iowa
" (Representative) Grosvenor
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" " Hansbrough, North Dakota
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" (Speaker) Henderson
Thomas Hendricks, widow of late Vice-President

Baroness Hengelmueller, wife of Austro-Hungarian Ambassador

Mrs. (Senator) Jones, Arkansas
" " Kenney, Delaware
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" (Senator) McComas, Maryland
" " McCumber, North Dakota
" " McEnery, Louisiana
" " McLaurin, South Carolina
" " McMillan, Michigan
" " Martin, Virginia
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Robt McKee, daughter of Ex-President Harrison

" (Justice) McKenna
" " Matthews
" (General) Miles
" " Merivago, wife of Mexican Ambassador
" (Senator) Nelson, Minnesota

" " Pettus, Alabama
" " Pritchard, North Carolina
" " Quarles, Wisconsin
" " Rawlins, Utah
" " Ross, Vermont

" (General) Ricketts
" (Senator) Scott, West Virginia
" " Shoup, Idaho
" " Spooner, Wisconsin

Elizabeth Cady Stanton
" " Stewart, Nevada
" (Surgeon General) Sternberg
" " Adlai E. Stevenson
" (Representative) Swanson

" (Admiral) Sampson
Mrs. (Captain) Sigbee
" John Sherman

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pay for a soap, you cannot get
anything purer, better, more
convenient and economical
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As she prodded and thumped, she let out triumphant shrieks. "Oh, you would, would ye? No plush furniture, have I? I'm a fly-be-night, am I? Take that and that and that!"

Mrs. Davis was routed. She turned her broad back to the enemy and ran for her wood-shed door.

"Give it to her! Give her another!" came from the spectators over the fence, who saw their own insults avenged and, like all man- and womankind, were eager to join forces with the victor. The new-comer's broom sailed through the wood-shed door after Mrs. Davis's retreating figure.

"Git up a pertition, sayin' she's a common scold an' a nuisance. We'll sign it," urged the row by the fence.

"I kin take care o' myself without a pertition," said the new-comer with dignity as she smoothed her rumpled hair. "And I'll thank yees ter turn yer faces the other way, for they hurt me eyes."

After which she fell to washing windows, and her house was the only tement in the block in which a stroke of work was done that day.

Caroline Lockhart.

SONG OF A KATYDID

By Sydney Prentice

SHE did,—
 Katy did,—
 I know she did,—
 She cheated you!
 She cheated other mortals too,
 After pledging to be true.
 I know she did,
 For I was hid
 Amid
 The roses over Katy's head;
 I heard her chide—
 I heard her cruelly deride
 Your vows of love.
 She craves such vows to feed her pride.
 She sighed—
 She sweetly lied
 To you.
 Ah, who
 Puts trust in Katy's sigh
 Will some day madly wish to die.
 She cheats
 With deadly sweets!
 She cheated, cheated, cheated you!
 I know her hollow heart all through.
 I heard her bid
 That you might love her, and you did.

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fond of Fine Foods.

And they're palate-pleasing
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Ralston Breakfast Food

has set the pace in cereals for years;
and the same expert care which pre-
serves its goodness, retains the flavor
and nutrition which Nature bestows in
the best obtainable grain from which
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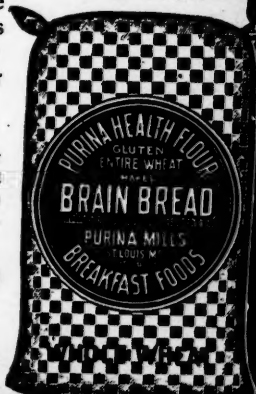
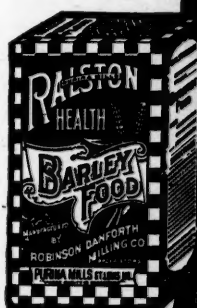
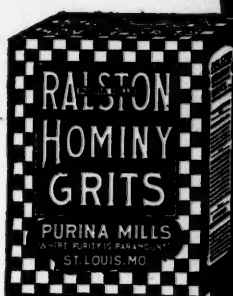
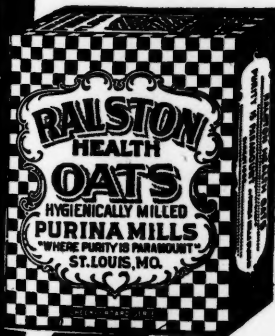
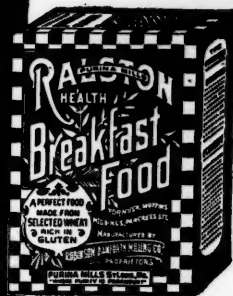
The full variety consisting of 5 2-lb. pack-
ages and the 12-lb. sack will be sent express pre-
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"Where Purity is Paramount"

806 Gratiot St., St. Louis, Mo.



She chid
 You then, oh, heartlessly she did!
 Yes, Katy did—
 She did.

EXTREMISTS are those whose views are diametrically opposed to ours.

If woman would only be more logical she would—no longer be woman.

L. de V. Matthewman.

**A Fulfilled
 Prophecy
 About
 Lincoln**

In the Presidential campaign of 1856 the Democrats in the West made an effective point by contrasting Mr. Buchanan's long public career as a Senator, Secretary of State, and Minister to England with General Fremont's limited experience, consisting of a service of twenty-one days in the United States Senate.

In the great campaign of 1860 they tried the same tactics, which had proved so successful, to disparage Mr. Lincoln. He had served but a single term in Congress, while Senator Douglas had for many years enjoyed a national reputation.

This point was urged in a heated discussion, overheard, between an ardent supporter of Senator Douglas and a German voter who favored Mr. Lincoln. The former finally thought to overwhelm his opponent by saying:

"Who is this Lincoln, anyhow? Nobody ever heard of him until Senator Douglas brought him into notice by holding joint debates with him. Senator Douglas, on the other hand, is a great statesman. Why, he has had his eye on the Presidential chair for the last ten years."

"Vot is dot you say?" was the reply. "You say Meester Dooglas have had his eye on the President chair for ten years?"

"Yes, that is just what I said."

"Vell, you shoost tell Meester Dooglas eef he keep hees eye on dot chair shoost a leedle vile longer, he vill see Old Abe Lincoln sitting down in it."

That closed the debate, amid a roar of laughter from the bystanders.

**A Vain
 Appeal**

NIGHT was at hand and it was raining heavily when I reached a comfortable-looking little cabin in a Tennessee mountain gulch a few years ago. I was worn out after an all-day ride, and as I had never yet been refused entertainment at any house at which I had applied, I felt pretty confident that I would soon be seated before a blazing log fire, eating hot slapjacks and fried ham and drinking coffee in the little cabin.

An old man came out of a little stable across the road just as I rode up, and when I asked if I could stay all night he replied with expected cordiality and hospitality:

"Why, to be sure you kin, to be sure! Light right off whilst I go into the house an' git a lantern to put your hoss up by. I cayn't see none too good in broad daylight, an' I have to have a lantern soon as the sun sets. I'll be right out soon as I git the lantern an' tell my ole woman you air here."



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OF THE UNITED STATES

120 Broadway, New York.

J.W.ALEXANDER, President

J.H.HYDE, Vice President

He was gone what seemed to me to be an unreasonably long time, and when he returned it was with an air of dejection.

"Sorry to disapp'int you, mister," he said, "but I reckon you'll have to mount your hoss an' ride on 'bout three mile to the next house. I know they'll put you up there. Sorry it ain't so I kin keep you."

"I am extremely tired and not very well," I said. "I would pay well for my entertainment, and try not to be any trouble to you if you would let me stay here."

"La, it ain't on 'count of the little trouble you'd be nor yit on 'count of any fear that you wouldn't pay that I can't keep you. There wouldn't be nothing to pay if you stayed. It is because—because—well, to tell you the plain out-an'-out truth, mister, it's on 'count o' my ole woman. I reckon a woman never gits to any age when she don't think more or less o' her looks, an' it do seem to me that my ole woman thinks more o' her looks now that she is seventy-five than she did fifty years ago. An' the plain fact is, she has loaned her switch to her sister-in-law to wear to a weddin', an' she sneezed her teeth out on the h'arth this afternoon an' broke the upper plate right in two an' crippled the lower plate so she can't wear 'em, an' she do look kind o' quare. Mebbe it's natchrel she shouldn't want to be seen lookin' so, an' I reckon you'll have to respect her feelin's in the matter an' ride on. Sorry, but I reckon it's what you'll have to do."

And that is what I did, with less respect for the "feelin's" of the old lady than I ought to have had.

MANY amusing stories are told of our colored fellow-citizens of the south by the raconteurs of that section.

Fowl Play

A venerable "darker" was haled before a justice of the peace and charged with gratifying his appetite for feathered denizens of the barn-yard in which he had no ownership. There were no witnesses to the act, but the birds were missing and feathers had been found around Uncle George's cabin. He was sharply interrogated by the magistrate, in the hope that he would get entangled in the questioning and the truth come out. Finally he was asked,—

"So you say, Uncle George, that you have not stolen any chickens?"

"Yes, sah. I done stole no chicken."

"Have you stolen any geese?"

"No, sah!"

"No turkeys?"

"No, sah!"

After a brief pause the suspected culprit was discharged with a sharp admonition. As he passed out he stopped before the justice, hat in hand, his ivories disclosed by a broad grin, and said,—

"Fo' de Lawd, Squire, if you'd said 'ducks,' you'd 'a' had me!"

Another one was caught "red-handed" with a fine fowl he had confiscated for his Christmas dinner. As his guilt was undeniable, and as he was a vigorous and vociferous exhorter in the church, the magistrate upbraided him for his disregard of the commandments, and asked him how he pretended to justify

STATEMENT of *The* Travelers Insurance Company OF HARTFORD, CONN.

Chartered 1863. (Stock.) Life, Accident and Employers
Liability Insurance.

JAMES G. BATTERSON, President.

PAID-UP CAPITAL

\$1,000,000

JANUARY 1, 1901.

Total Assets, (Accident Premiums in the hands of Agents NOT INCLUDED.) \$30,861,030.06

Total Liabilities (Including Reserves) . . . 26,317,903.25

Excess Security to Policy-holders, . . . 4,543,126.81

Surplus, . . . 3,543,126.81

Paid to Policy-holders since 1864, : 42,643,384.92

Paid to Policy-holders in 1900, . . . 2,908,464.03

Loaned to Policy-holders on Policies (Life) 1,586,652.20

Life Insurance in Force, . . . 109,019,851.00

GAINS FOR THE YEAR 1900.

In Assets, . . . \$3,167,819.96

In Insurance in Force (Life Department Only), 8,685,297.06

Increase in Reserves (Both Departments), (34% basis) 2,484,392.52

Premiums Collected, . . . 6,890,888.55

Sylvester C. Dunham, Vice-President

John E. Morris, Secretary

J. B. Lewis, M. D., Medical Director and Adjuster

Edward V. Preston, Superintendent of Agencies

Hiram J. Messenger, Actuary

himself. He promptly braced himself and replied with an air of mingled confidence and sincerity:

"Wal, yo' see, Squire, Ise a pow'ful b'liever in pra'r. I had prayed de good Lawd sev'al times to send Unc' Gabe a chicken, but no chicken come. Den Ise sho' somet'ing's wrong with de pra'r. So I change him an' prayed de good Lawd to send Unc' Gabe foh de chicken, an' de chicken come de fust night!"

A Tale of Two Ideals

In the freshness of early morning two "salesladies" were seated in a crowded trolley, going to their counters. The other passengers, having ears to hear, soon gathered that the two were named "Aggie" and "Said." Nor could the passengers escape passing mental judgment on the respective merits of "Charlie" and "Gus," the entire evidence being audibly laid before them. When this thrilling topic had been exhausted, the salesladies relapsed into a dreamy silence, from which "Said." suddenly emerged with a question of mighty import.

"Say, Ag.," cried Said., "if you could have anything in the world you wished, what would you choose?"

"Well," Aggie replied slowly, while all the car leaned forward, "I should choose enough silk stockings to last me ten years. What would you like, Said.?"

"Me!" spoke up Said. promptly. "That's easy! It's the dream of me life to have all the money I'd want, so I could go to me job in a cab."

Caroline Lockhart.

WHEN POLLY DANCED THE MINUET

By Adella Washer

Now high and clear, then low and sweet,
The music rippled through the air,
While waxen candles shed soft light
Upon the gay throng gathered there.

The fragrant breath of new-mown hay
Came from the fields that lay outside,
And perfume from the roses stole
Through doors and windows open wide.

The dusky fiddlers' rosined bows
Flew o'er the quick responding strings,
And love tripped with the dancers gay,
And touched them with his shining wings.

The powdered hair framed faces young,
Their coats were gay as Joseph's own,
And tongues and feet as lightly flew
As seed from ripened thistles blown.

50 YEARS REPUTATION

IS BEHIND

1850

EVERY BOTTLE OF

BURNETT'S VANILLA



VISITORS to the Pan-American Exposition this summer should not fail to examine the exhibit of The Prudential Insurance Company of America, which occupies a readily accessible part of the Liberal Arts Section of the Manufactures Building. The exhibit was prepared by the Statistician of the Company, Mr. Frederick L. Hoffman, and occupies about three hundred and twenty-five feet of wall space.

The Prudential Insurance Company of America has always devoted much labor and money to the scientific study and development of life insurance in this country, but never before have the results of the Company's investigations been placed on public view on so large a scale. There are forty charts and diagrams, most of which pertain to the general Industrial experience of the Company, which is sufficiently large to warrant reasonably accurate conclusions as to the relation of age, sex, race, nativity, and occupation to human longevity. To the millions of Prudential policy-holders this exhibit will undoubtedly prove one of considerable interest.

An exhibit was made by The Prudential at Paris last year, and met with such favor from the Jury of Awards that a gold medal was granted to The Prudential, the only gold medal awarded to an American life-insurance company.

Many facts are brought out in the Company's exhibit of interest to policy-holders, as indicating a strong tendency towards a constantly increasing degree of liberality in dealing with the policy-holders' interests.

The vast extent of the Company's office and field operations is brought out by the fact that The Prudential has eighteen officers, one thousand and thirty-four managers of departments and clerks at the Home Office in Newark, New Jersey, and an agency and field medical staff of over fourteen thousand men. It is also interesting to note that The Prudential has over four million policies in force, a number equivalent to about twelve times the population of Buffalo. The amount of insurance in force exceeds \$600,000,000.

Walnuts and Wine

The fairest one among them all
 Was Polly with her golden hair,
 Her soft throat fringed with cobweb lace,
 The rounded arms half hid, half bare.

Touched with the glamour of her grace,
 More than one heart slipped in her net,
 As down the softly lighted room
 Sweet Polly danced the minuet.

And though she was my great-great-aunt,
 I only see her youthful face,
 For in her picture on my wall
 Time has not marred a line of grace.

**Value of a
 Heroic
 Precedent**

At the great battle of Stone River the Confederates opened the engagement by a furious assault in overwhelming force upon the right wing of the Union army, attacking its front and flank. One or two divisions were driven back in more or less confusion, and at the close of the first day's fighting General Rosecrans re-formed his line almost at right angles to the one at the beginning of the battle. General Garesche, the gallant chief of staff, had had his head taken off while riding with his commander along the line, and Rosecrans was greatly affected by this loss. The situation certainly was anything but hopeful. During the night the heroic Union leader rode along the newly formed line before retiring to see that everything was prepared for the morrow's struggle.

When he came to General Jefferson C. Davis, commanding one of the divisions that had been so roughly handled, and one of the bravest officers that ever drew a sword, he found that hero standing with a group containing his brigade commanders and his staff around a little camp-fire. Riding up to the group, Rosecrans said to Davis,—

"Well, Jeff., we have had a pretty bad day of it."

"Yes," was the reply, "but I have been in tighter places than this."

Rosecrans at once straightened up and asked:

"Tell me, Jeff. Where were you ever in a tighter place than this?"

"At the battle of Buena Vista," replied Davis. "Santa Anna had over twenty thousand men and Taylor had less than five thousand. We were hundreds of miles from help or supplies, and at the end of the first day's fight the Mexicans had us practically surrounded. Wasn't that a tighter place than this?"

"You are right," said Rosecrans, brightening up, "and yet you whipped them out." Pausing a moment, he added, "And that is just what we are going to do here!"

"Of course we are!" was the reply, and after giving some orders Rosecrans continued his ride along the line with a new light in his eye.

And although it took two more days of hard fighting, these courageous

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THE BUSINESS WOMAN AWHEEL.—A business woman who worked from eight to twelve hours every day gives in the interview below some strong reasons why she rides a wheel. Her residence is some three miles distant from her place of business, and, weather permitting, she rides to and from all the year round. She finds though she might leave the store tired and fagged, before she reached home she was thoroughly recuperated. Her own words are as follows:

"Two years ago my physician said I was breaking down. I knew it before he told me. I acted with promptness. I purchased a house in the suburbs, three miles from the store, and bought a bicycle. I took an outing of two weeks and learned to ride it, and unless the weather forbids I ride to and from my place of business. It was an experiment, but it has proved a great success. My health rapidly improved. It gave me what I needed, exercise in the open air. In the morning I enter the store refreshed and invigorated. In the evening I arrive home rested and buoyant in feeling. My children have become bicyclists also, and come down a couple of miles each night to meet me and escort me home. We make quite a family party, and often wheel off a few miles into the country before turning homeward. It is not difficult, if one has a little imagination, to realize what a merry time we have and how happy we all are, when, fresh and glowing, we all wheel up to the door, where mother stands waiting to welcome us.

"This is my reason for riding the bicycle and why I use it, love it, and thank God for it."

words spoken at that glimmering camp-fire were made good, and Bragg's army retreated, leaving Rosecrans in possession of the field after one of the most critical and decisive battles of the war.

In relating this incident to me, General Davis added: "It seems like a curious coincidence that it was at this same battle of Buena Vista that Bragg won his first military laurels. He was captain of a battery, and General Taylor's order, 'Give them a little more grape, Captain Bragg!' made him known to the country and to fame, becoming one of those battle-sayings which go into history, like Lawrence's 'Don't give up the ship!'"

Edward P. Howe.

**The Social
Oyster**

OYSTERS are widely distributed throughout the world. Their chief habitats are in the United States and in France, with scattering colonies in England, Holland, and other places. But the whole number in other parts of the world is inconsiderable as compared with that in the United States. Maryland alone produces twice as many oysters as all the rest of the world put together. Oysters and poverty, Dickens says, go together, but it is not so in this country. Baltimore cans an immense number for both foreign and domestic consumption, the revenue from which is enormous. The Indians of the coast, before the discovery of America, used them in great quantities. Near the mouth of St. John's River, Florida, there is a forest-clad mound of over fifty feet in height, extending over many acres of ground, consisting entirely of old oyster-shells.

The female oyster has the numerous yearly progeny of about sixteen million and sometimes very many more. But, as both parents are somewhat fixed in their habits, they take no account of them as they float off indiscriminately in a sort of happy-go-lucky way, at the end of which the young creatures may find themselves stifled on a muddy bottom, or carried away so far beyond soundings that not one of them survives. In this condition the oyster is a little shell-less animal, paddling about with a few filaments called cilia, like microscopic eyelashes. At this stage of its existence it is only about one-hundred-and-fiftieth of an inch in length. So profuse is a bed of oysters of these minute larvæ, that the water there during a "fall of spat," as it is called, assumes a milky tint. If the current there be not so strong as to bear away the feebly paddling larvæ, and the bottom is overlaid with rock or shell, or has projections of any sort, they make lodgement and instantly begin to form shell. All sorts of devices are sometimes employed on planting grounds to give the larvæ a place to which they can attach themselves, consisting principally of fascines, tiles covered with a friable cement, shells, etc., all of which are technically known as "cultch."

If the bottom, or the space between it and the surface of the water, is occupied by any sort of projections, one condition already exists for the well-being of the young oyster. It is protected thereby from suffocating mud, and the lime which it must secrete for the formation of its shell is abundantly supplied by the surrounding water. So it clothes itself with a home-made garment without price, a garment which is also shelter from water inclemencies and from predatory animals. Two of the absolute needs of existence are

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CYCLING "RAINY DAISIES."—*Some Whose Enthusiasm No Amount of Downpour Dampens.*—In the days of a few years ago there were sets of hardy club-men who never allowed rain to interfere with their wheeling outings, but who, clad in woollens, would go a score of miles and return drenched and muddy, declaring that they had a hilarious time. During the last few years this sort of enthusiasts seems to have thinned out considerably, but the stormy April weather brought to light the fact that they are not all out of the game, and that many of them are returning. Probably also the number of rainy-day riders has been augmented by some new-comers whose enjoyment of cycling is too keen to be completely spoiled by rain. Certain it is that on any one of the series of days of unrelenting downpour there was to be seen every now and then on the boulevards and cycle-paths some sturdy wheelman plodding along as if he did not mind being drenched so long as he had his ride. In all the number of these riders would probably reach two- or three-score daily. Some would regard them pityingly, while others, not robust enough to risk doing likewise, were envious; but for everyone there was something inspiring about an enthusiasm that could not be dampened by any amount of rainfall. Another circumstance of the recent "wet season," that was a striking demonstration of the genuineness and earnestness there is in the newly awakened interest of cyclists, was the way they watched the weather and burst forth upon the roads at the least sign of a clearing up. It was as if they had been prisoners, moaning and chafing in some irksome bonds and had suddenly been freed from them. Several evenings during the rainy spell there was a partial clearing at sunset when the rain ceased to fall. Then, at about six o'clock, when Shelley's "golden lightning" of the sinking sun" showed in the west, the wheelmen, like the skylark, began to "float and run" by scores over the dripping macadam roads. It is evidences such as these that show how binding is the fascination of wheeling with those who have learned to truly enjoy it.

thus fulfilled. The third and only remaining one is food. The oyster cannot go in search of it, as once it did in geological times, for it is now, as it was not then, a fixture. Well, the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick-maker come to its door and immolate themselves to supply this last need of the oyster's existence. It has an adductor muscle, commonly called its heart. This it relaxes, and a little elastic pad at the hinge of the shell gently opens it for the entrance of food-bearing water.

What is its food? One had better ask, What is not its food? A little of everything which is small as well as toothsome—diatoms in myriads, beautiful diatoms, some of the largest of which are scarcely visible to the naked eye, innumerable eggs of sea animals, both vegetable and animal food—all is grist that is good which comes to the oyster's mill. It strains out as far as able all the rest. Muddy water, however, it cannot long deal with, any more than men can live long in a foul atmosphere. The protoplasmic mass forming an oyster assimilates food with wondrous rapidity. The oysters along several miles of shore were once examined day after day in the autumn, when they were so thin as to realize the name by which oystermen know them in that condition, as "a bladder of water." A rain of two or three days' duration came on, and at the end of it the oysters were fat. That change was not the plumping to which they are sometimes subjected for trade purposes. It was rapid fattening by assimilation of food brought down from neighboring streams and contributing new elements to the oyster's larder.

The three best known species of oyster are the *Ostrea edulis*, the *Ostrea angulata*, of Europe, and the *Ostrea virginiana*, of America. The American oyster differs from the two other species in a particular to which enough attention, in the interest of trade and of the epicure, has not been directed. The American oyster does not, as the others do, incubate its spawn under its mantle. Consequently it affords a singularly good opportunity for propagating a variety which shall be finer than any at present extant through the simple process of the artificial selection which is applied to many less important things. Despite individual differences of taste as to size and flavor, there is a general public ideal towards which there is a constant tendency.

France, after the nearly complete destruction of her oyster industry from natural and artificial causes combined, looked to her scientific men for assistance, as she has always done in similar emergencies. From Lake Avernus, in Italy, now known as Lake Fusaro, the site of the oldest oyster culture of which we know, French investigators took their hints for the present successful restoration of that lucrative industry in France. French operations comprise open shore culture and the refinement of parking oysters in large reservoirs, for the sake of their final development in cleanliness, size, and flavor. Among these refinements is the celebrated greening of oysters, making a variety known as the oysters of Marennes. The greenish color in these is not sought as such, but merely as an indication of a flavor which was for a long time attributed to the direct influence of clayey soil. The color, however, is derived from the absorption by these oysters of the greenish diatoms with which the waters flowing into the parks abound. These parks, or claires, as they are called by the French, are reservoirs surrounded by substantial dikes. Sometimes parks are made to communicate with others by floodgates.

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It is not very many years since that, in even the wisely administered State of Connecticut, no man could plant oysters with proprietary rights in them beyond a certain day in the autumn. That is all changed now. If Maryland and Virginia too do not now see their way clear to lease ground for the sake of the enterprise of private occupation, necessity will in due time prove to them also that nothing but that course can command the greatest oyster food-supply for the benefit of the country and their own commercial advantage, which might be increased a hundredfold over the present status. Just as the General Government has been obliged to take under its control other kinds of fisheries, so, in the course of time, State control of the oyster industry will be perfected by the prompting of the law of necessity. The wisest administration is needed of the enormous gift of nature to this land in its wealth of oysters.

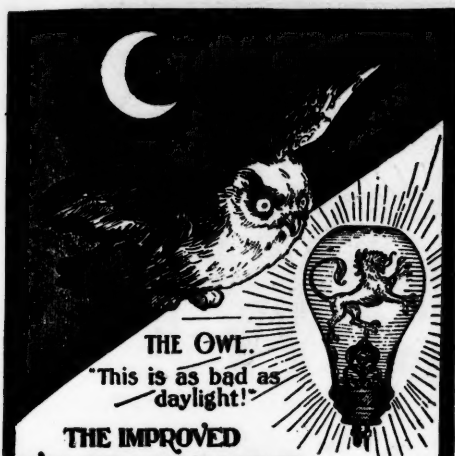
The oyster has enemies, conspicuous among which are the whelk, which bores through its shell and sucks it out of its shelter, and the starfish, which enfolds it to suffocation and absorbs it bodily. But it has to its increase no enemy so potent as the neglect to adopt a system which would immeasurably increase the present food-supply from oysters in the Chesapeake. Present inaction is like that of the Indian, who would have made of the whole world an untilled hunting ground. The day must come, however, lavish as nature has been of her stores, when waste will begin to be felt. It is the province of the higher civilization to restrict waste of all kinds of natural stores. Some portents already indicate that perception of the fact regarding the oyster supply is growing. Present fish propagation and protection and the new departure in forestry look in that direction.

The oyster lies far away from the borderland whereon animal and vegetable life are scarcely, if at all in some cases, distinguishable. It possesses a heart, a ganglionic centre connected with afferent and efferent nerves, representing rudimentary brain and nervous system, a mouth, stomach, liver, intestinal apparatus, and the kind of circulation and life which all these imply. Enough of the oyster in its physical attributes has now been said.

Revert for a moment in conclusion to the romantic spot where the history of its first culture, and, therefore, in the truest sense, its worldly history, begins, centring around Lake Fusaro, the ancient Lake Avernus, in Italy. Near by Avernus lay, and still lies, Baïæ, the celebrated watering-place of voluptuous Rome. The site of Avernus was the basis of Cicero's poetic description of the place easy to enter, but from which there is no return. Not far away is the grotto of the famed Cumæan sybil. Here Agrippa had a passage cut from the Mediterranean to Lake Lucrinus, and another from that to Lake Avernus. Here he equipped and trained a great number of men in naval manœuvres, and soon defeated the younger Pompey in two engagements, which gave Augustus his first supremacy on sea as well as on land.

Thus incidentally did the humble oyster partake in the mutations of empire through the incidental production of lakes of brackish water, due to the wars of Rome.

R. Meade Bache.



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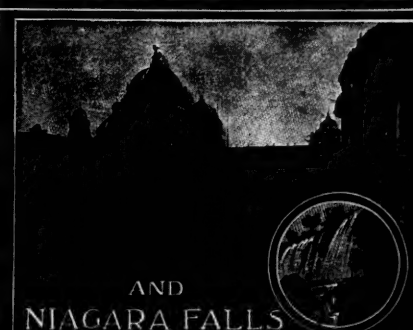
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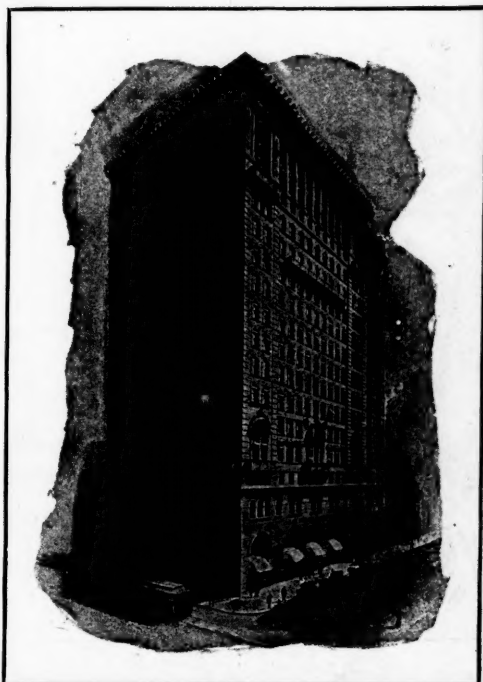
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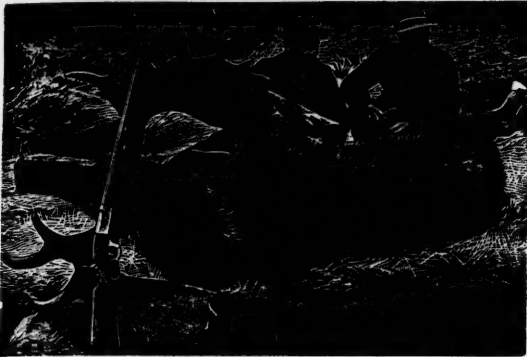
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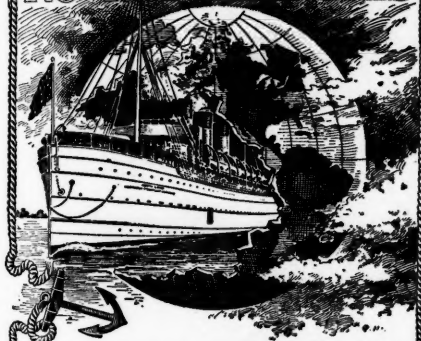
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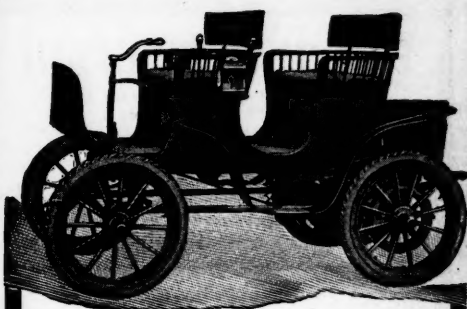
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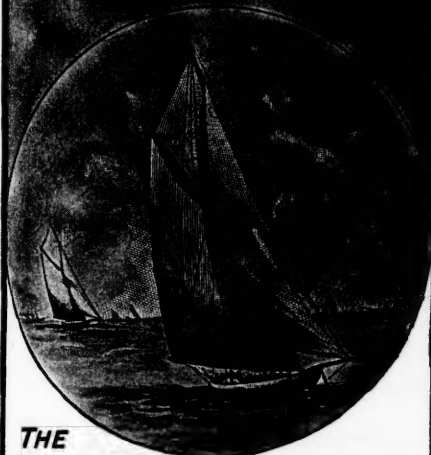
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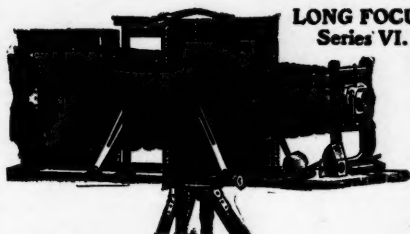
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JIGSAN'S MAIDEN EFFORT AT GOLF.—Continued.

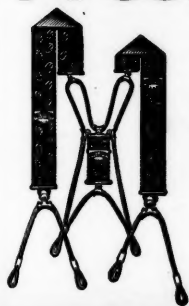


JIGSAN JAGS.—“Good heavens! Bill, we’re ketched between two fires.”

BILL.—“Yer mean we’re ketched between three fires; dere comes de golfers ober de hill too.”



Whatever your "bent" President Suspenders



allow you to follow
it in absolute comfort

Riding, bowling, walking, golfing, at work or at play, you can rely on complete suspender comfort if you wear President Suspenders. The only suspender constructed on scientific principles. Refuse any of the many cheap imitations. The word "President" on the buckles distinguishes the genuine. Every pair guaranteed. Trimmings can not rust. Sold everywhere, soc., or by mail.

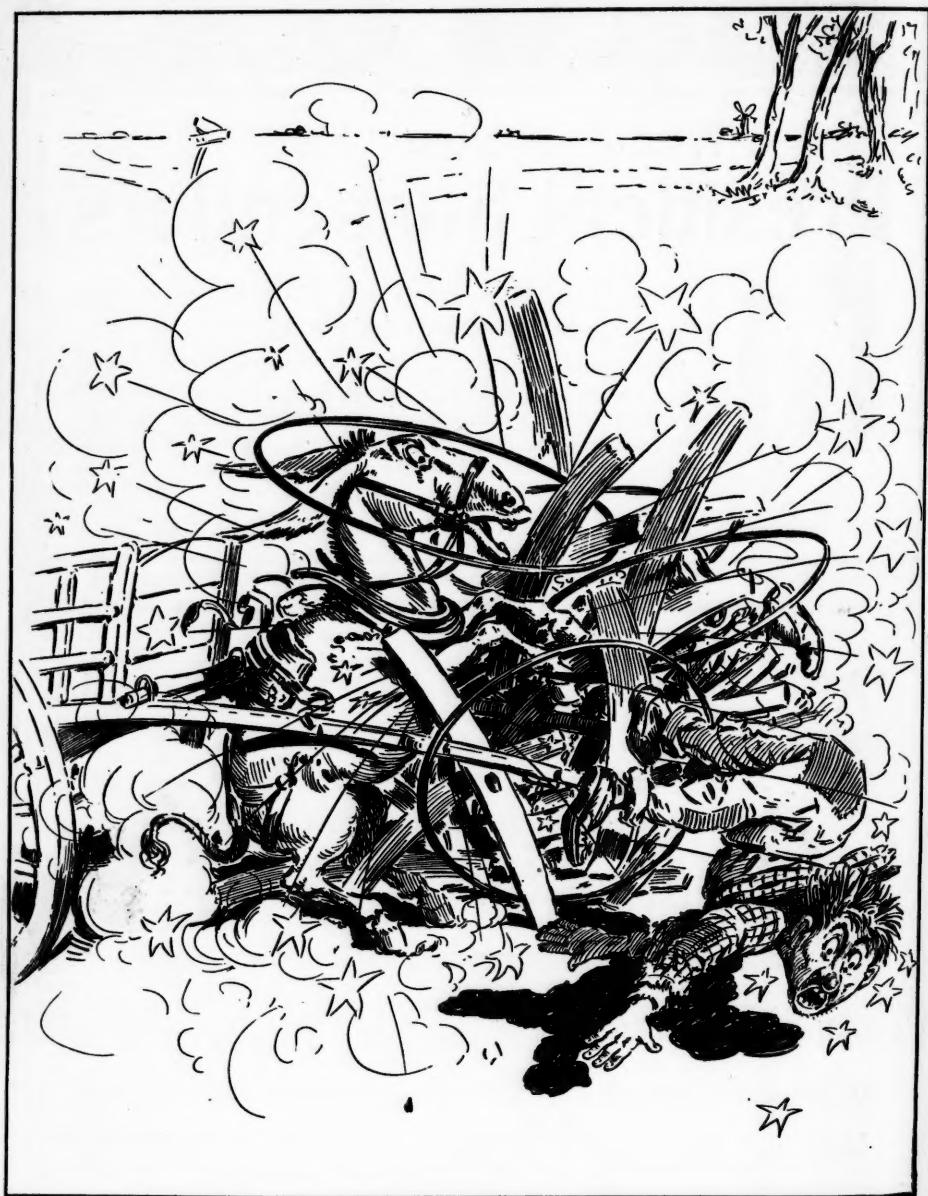
C. A. EDGARTON MFG. CO., Box 269 SHIRLEY, MASS.

ANY woman who is enterprising enough to spend
ten minutes in learning to understand the

SNAP HOOK AND EYE

will secure a life time of comfort. First see that it is properly sewed on and then experiment till you find just the touch and the twist that is easiest for you. It cannot break, bend, or rust. All leading stores keep them.

JIGSAN'S MAIDEN EFFORT AT GOLF.—Continued.



Bang!

THE ANVIL

BY

R. V. RISLEY

AUTHOR OF "THE SLEDGE,"
"MEN'S TRAGEDIES," ETC.



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